John Henry Mackay

Max Stirner

His Life and His Work

Translated from the
Third German Edition
by Hubert Kennedy

Boston Public Library
Boston, MA 02116

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ISBN: 1-59457-983-0

Peremptory Publications
Concord, California
http://home.pacbell.net/hubertk/

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Foreword to the Third Edition

This third edition is published in a private edition—limited to 325 copies—and is not on the market.

It was the only way to make it possible.

For the second edition of my biography of Max Stirner shared the fate of the first, was just as difficult and just as slow to sell as the first, so that (as I said at the end of its foreword), I would probably not live to see a third if I wanted to wait to see it sold out.

But to arrange a new edition has still been for me in the last years an ever-recurring wish. It was, as I gladly admit, not a particularly happy thought to add the results of my research in the preceding ten years to the second edition of 1910 in an appendix, instead of integrating them into the text. That this could be done—doubtlessly would be done—someday after my death by an editor in a way that endangered the layout and unity of the whole made me uneasy. Thus there arose in me the plan of a new, uniform, and standard private edition alongside the second—since it is of course not feasible to pulp an only dipped into edition. The remaining second edition is to continue to be sold publicly until it too one day gives way to a fourth.

My plan was realized under great difficulties. Thanks to the small—oh, so small!—number of those who today stand untiringly for everything that bears the name Stirner.

But now to shape this edition as I planned and wanted, and to give it the final definitive form, has been my whole effort. Not only has the integration mentioned been undertaken, but individual sections have found an entirely new form, while I submitted the whole to yet another check. Small changes in only a few places were necessary. That it also had to be outwardly distinguished from the first two editions in form and appearance was obvious.

Again I have to thank here those who so willingly helped me this time too.

In the first place is Dr. Gustav Mayer in Zehlendorf/Berlin. A man thoroughly knowledgeable in the history of the pre-March era [the period before the revolution of 1848], he is now in a position to look into sources previously closed and succeeded not only in finding a very early separately published writing of Stirner, his *Gegenwort*, but also the convincing confirmation of his factual collaboration on the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung* of 1842, a confirmation that surprised me all the more, since not only was I given the exactly opposite confirmation when I personally inquired of the Brockhaus company long years ago, but also before the publication of the second edition, the manuscript editor, Dr. H. H. Houben in Leipzig, once again confirmed that report as correct.

Dr. Mayer had already partly made use of his very fortunate find in his article in the first issue of volume 6 of the *Zeitschrift für Politik* of 1913: "Die Anfänge des politischen Radikalismus im vormärzlichen Preussen" [The beginnings of political

radicalism in pre-March Prussia]. I cannot recommend the essay enough to each of my readers who wishes to gain a wider picture of the political currents of that epoch than I can give in my study dedicated to only one person. At the same time he will see from it how thoroughly in error the opinion of the author is when—coming from his directly opposite philosophy of life—he sees in the work of Stirner only a continuation and an extension of the intellectual world of ideas of that radicalism, whereas in reality it is an impregnable construction erected through his own creative strength on the rubble of that fallen fortress of the "intellect." Thus the position assigned Stirner in his work—beside, not over the others—can only be an entirely false one.

Another find is "Über die Verpflichtung der Staatsbürger zu irgendeinem Religionsbekenntnis," which Dr. Mayer reprinted in the appendix to his essay (*Unbekanntes von Stirner*) along with *Gegenwort* as a "Program of The Free" and likewise ascribes to Stirner, even if not absolutely. I cannot recognize this as coming from him, as gladly and gratefully as I otherwise welcome every increase and enrichment of his life's work. Not only the work itself, but also the reasons given for his authorship appear to me rather to speak against it than for it, and I must therefore leave it to the reader to decide. Also the collaboration of Stirner on the *Deutsches Jahrbuch* can unfortunately be supported in regard to certain articles only on conjectures and cannot be determined with the thoroughly necessary assurance.

It is a pleasure for me to be allowed here to express my very special thanks to Dr. Gustav Mayer for his kindness in making known to me not only his extremely fortunate and important finds already before his own publication, but also for the numerous other valuable tips and hints with which he so willingly supported my work.

This new edition receives its most beautiful decoration through the splendidly successful reproduction of a twelve-page manuscript of Stirner, after every hope had long been given up of uncovering even one of his works in its original form. It is the handwritten manuscript for the article "Kunst und Religion" from the old archive of the *Rheinische Zeitung* and is found in the possession of Prof. Dr. Josef Hansen, librarian at St. Gereon in Cologne. I owe him my greatest thanks for the graciously given permission to reproduce it. [The facsimile has been omitted from this edition.]

Finally, for the list of the Russian translations of *Der Einzige* in the bibliography of the appendix I am finally obliged to Leo Kasarnowski in Halensee/Berlin, as well as for many an indication of his relentless meticulousness. [The bibliography has been omitted from this edition.]

This third edition has now also found its well-justified name and subject index. I sought to arrange it so that the reader finds his way in everything that concerns Stirner and those nearest him, but with persons with whom he only came into distant contact, I have left out references, so as not to increase the extent of the index unduly. Nevertheless even for them one can easily find what he is looking for.

At the same time as this the second edition of Stirner's *Kleinere Schriften und Entgegnungen* is now also finally made possible, at first in a "Special Edition" twice the size of the first, which naturally contains all the finds of the last twenty-five

years. It is to be hoped that it can be further enlarged—and perhaps very soon—through new discoveries. Thus Stirner is supposed to have collaborated in 1842 on two further journals, which until now unfortunately have not been found. An article by him on "Die Lage der Lehrer" [The situation of the teacher] was said to be in a journal *Die Eisenbahn*, published by the publisher of *Gegenwort*, Robert Binder in Leipzig; in another journal, edited by Robert Heller, is an article with the remarkable title "Rosen" [Roses]. Perhaps one or another reader of this edition will be more fortunate in the search and oblige me by reporting to me his success.

Of the first helpers of my work, death has now also taken the last ones: in 1911 Daniel Collin died at age eighty-seven; likewise in 1911 the tireless Ludwig Pietsch; and also the aged Enno Sander in St. Louis is, so far as I know, no longer living. Of the twenty-two only Pauline Julius, Stirner's earlier pupil, now also in her late eighties, is living in Steglitz/Berlin. She and Baroness von der Goltz are, therefore, the only two living who have seen Stirner face to face—both as young girls.

It is time to conclude.

If I may do so with a final wish, it is the one already expressed: Let my book, which I am here still allowed to give a final and definitive form, which makes every later "revision" by other and probably unwarranted hands unnecessary and superfluous, not end up in such hands. I will leave behind a copy of this edition in which all the results that still become known to me are added in a form ready for the press; what may still be found later can easy be treated in the same way, without taking from my work its own, unified form. This will already prove to be advisable besides, since the intention I expressed in the foreword to the second edition—to leave all the material of my Stirner work to the British Museum in London—has given way to another plan, about which those friends of Stirner, who are known to me, will directly hear from me.

I lay my wish into the hands of the readers of this book, who are at the same time friends of Stirner. They will watch over it as they will watch over his inheritance. For probably no thinker has found more convinced and truer friends than he, however small their number may be for the time being. For a long time I have no longer been the only one who has recognized the immeasurable practical consequences of his ideas on the shaping—and complete transformation—of our whole social life. Not only the greatness and expanse of his thoughts, but also their integrity and inviolable honesty have won them to him, and it may well be said today with an easy mind that his legacy is safe for the future.

He stands at its beginning—*this great destroyer of the empty phrase*. Even if we have to see in our days that it still lives and drives the peoples to murder and madness—he has still given it the death blow on which the greatest enemy of life is slowly bleeding to death.

Berlin-Charlottenburg, Berlinerstrasse 166
August 1914
John Henry Mackay

Foreword to the First Edition

It is only with reluctance that I have decided to give a provisional conclusion to my researches into the life of Max Stirner through the present book.

It is not that I feel any obligation to the public to accelerate my work in any way; the Germans have so long and so completely forgotten their boldest and most consequent thinker, that they have lost any right to the gift of his life.

No, what impels me is, first, the purely personal grounds, that this work has been impeded too long by other plans of my own—these must finally give way; then, too, the firm conviction that only an unexpected chance would still be able to open up new sources. To wait for this chance meant to put off finishing the edition to an uncertain time.

Thus I give what I have. No one can regret more than I that it is so little. But it is at any rate much more than I—after the first survey—ever hoped to achieve.

The picture of this life could never have been sketched, if my hand had not been helpfully led on many occasions. My first and most pleasurable duty is, therefore, to thank all those who have supported me in word and deed.

My warmest thanks belong in the first place to my old friend, the schoolteacher Max Hildebrandt in Berlin, who in the years 1889–91, before I even had the opportunity to return to Berlin, was the most loyal and untiring helper of my work.

Further I feel myself deeply indebted to retired gymnasium teacher Dr. Ewald Horn in Steglitz/Berlin, to whom we are already indebted for many valuable contributions to the philosophy of egoism, and who generously placed at my disposal the results of his own researches—achieved through his warm love of the cause no less than through a rare fortunate chance.

A third name, not an unknown one, will be given due mention in a more suitable place, in the Introduction, where I will tell the story of this work.

Then, among those who knew Max Stirner personally and who helped me with their memories of him as their most valuable gifts, I name first those who have since joined the list of the deceased, whom my thanks no longer reach. They are: writer and city councilor Adolph Streckfuss, whom I visited before his death in 1895 in Berlin; and editor-in-chief of the *Illinois Staats-Zeitung*, Hermann Raster in Chicago, who was one of the first to give me detailed reports on Stirner by letter.

Of those still living, who knew Stirner personally, I visited almost every single one as far as it was in my power to do so, and I cannot say with what friendliness I was received everywhere and in what a kind way my purpose was met. Thus in the course of years, always after previous, often detailed correspondence, I have spoken with and retain personal memories of the following: retired court judge Alexander Kapp, now in Berlin, earlier in Hamm in Westphalia, who visited Stirner as a young student and admires him today as he did then; Guido Weiss, the earlier editor of *Die Wage* in Frankfurt a.M., who only a year ago set down his valuable memories of "The Free" in the *Vossische Zeitung* in several highly interesting articles, even if, unfortunately, they are not entirely free of errors with regard to the person of Stirner; Pauline Julius in Steglitz/Berlin, a sister of Gustav Julius and an early pupil of Stirner, who also put me into possession of a Stirner autograph; Privy Councilor Rudolf von Gottschall in Leipzig, who had earlier placed at my disposal what he recently reported in his *Jugenderinnerungen* [Memoirs of youth], so that it was already put to good use before it was published; Gustav von Szczepanski in Weimar, who as a member of the literary society "Der Tunnel" [see note on page xi] did not have a connection with the Hippel circle, but who gave me extraordinarily useful accounts of it; Prof. Dr. Gustav Siegmund in Berlin, the brother-in-law of Herwegh; Dr. Albert Fränkel in Leipzig, who supported me very effectively with his lively remembrances and his interest; Prof. Dr. Immanuel Schmidt in Gross-Lichterfelde/Berlin, who gave me equally valuable reports on Stirner and on Marie Dähnhardt; antiquarian Emanuel Mai in Berlin, the thorough expert on the pre-March days; and finally Enno Sander of St. Louis, Missouri, former war minister of the Republic of Baden, with whom I spoke just this spring in Dessau. They all saw Stirner face to face, some seldom and some more often, and all still remember him.

For written, not personally obtained memories of Stirner and his time I am grateful for direct reports from the following: Henry Ulke in Washington, D.C., who may rightly say of himself that he "never lost his respect for the ideals of his youth," and whom I unfortunately never met on a visit to his new homeland; medical officer of health Dr. Ludwig Ruge, who, to my questions regarding his article on "The Free" in the *National-Zeitung*, willingly added to it; and Ministerialrat Dr. Wilhelm Jordan in Frankfurt a.M., who likewise gave my questions his very kind attention.

The number of those to whom I turned in the course of the years in the hope that they could have stood in some kind of connection with Stirner, without this hope proving well founded—more than fifty and they included nearly all who could come into consideration—is too large for me to think of giving their names here. Many among them had possibly seen Stirner, but their memories are too faded for them to be able to help me. On the other hand, several supported me with valuable advice

and hints, and I would like to say at least to Dr. (honoris causa) Theodor Fontane and Prof. Ludwig Pietsch in Berlin, that I have not forgotten the friendliness they showed me. The charming descriptions of the former from the literary period of his youth are not always entirely exact with regard to the Hippel circle, since they are based all too confidently on the accounts of H. Beta. But they as well as the sketches of the latter, the writer turned artist, form estimable contributions to contemporary history—of which we have, unfortunately, all too few. I will also gratefully recall the present owner of the Otto Wigand publishing house, Richard Küster, Wigand's grandson, in Leipzig. What he could do to help me, he certainly did. But since Otto Wigand himself had all the papers from the 1840s destroyed before his death in 1870—on grounds of expediency—there was lost with them the last trace of what could have had a connection with Stirner and all efforts were without result. I am grateful to attorney Schindler in Bayreuth for his kind efforts by which the birth house of Stirner could be found there again; the permission to duplicate the letter of Stirner in the appendix is due to the kindness of its fortunate owner, Günther Koch in Frankfurt a.M. [The facsimile of the Stirner letter is omitted in this edition.]

Finally, it is quite impossible for me to remember here the various other acts of assistance that have been shown me in such an extensive degree; enough when I say that the "effort of the search" was made easier for me almost everywhere by kind helpfulness and hardly any information requested was denied me by the church and municipal authorities of the various cities—all the way to the Royal Police Headquarters in Berlin—if it was obtainable at all.

Two old acquaintances of Marie Dähnhardt in London wish not to be named. One approached her on my behalf—unfortunately almost completely in vain; but both willingly disclosed to me their memories of her. Together with what Daniel Collin, the earlier owner of the Guttentag bookshop in Berlin, related about her, as well as the reports I received earlier: from Malwide von Meysenbug, the author of *Memoiren einer Idealistin*, in Rome in 1891; from the widow of Karl Heinzen in Boston in 1893; and from Friedrich Beust in Zurich about his deceased friend Techow—they made it possible for me to trace her life as far as was done.

Further, the following were at my disposal: a letter of Edgar Bauer from the year 1882—very important, but to be taken with great caution regarding its facts; another letter from the pen of the now likewise deceased Friedrich Engels in London; personal reports on Stirner from the poet of *Das hohe Lied*, Titus Ullrich; the same from the elderly writer Dr. Julius Löwenberg and from the chairman of the administration of the Imperial Disability Fund, Dr. Otto Michaelis—all likewise no longer among the living.

I think I can say that probably nothing has been left uninvestigated. But my work also had to suffer under unfortunate chance happenings, even if through no fault of my own. Thus, to relate only two cases, the old lady with whom Stirner lived his last years and who certainly more than any other would have been able to tell about the man Stirner, a Mme. Weiss, was still living a short time before the house

in Philippstrasse was discovered; and in Zurich I lived almost next door to an old veteran of the 1840s, Dr. Karl Nauwerck, who doubtlessly had known Stirner, only to learn of this when he died.

I placed a further great hope in a report that reached me from the United States of the existence of important papers—by and about Stirner. It proved to be false, and I can describe the way in which the most definite hopes were aroused without fulfilling them—for what reason?—as not other than irresponsible.

No one can more sharply see the gaping holes in my book, its incompleteness and inadequacy, than I, nor feel it more painfully. All that I hope for is that this attempt—my work cannot be and is not meant to be more—will be viewed as such, as worth building on, and that in the scaffolding that has been erected, with every stone helpfully brought to it, the reconstruction of this life will rise higher and higher from now on.

Therefore my request is issued today, as eight years ago, only still more urgently—and this time to all readers of this book—to continue to assist me: on the basis of the present book, to help me by word and deed. Every new report, every extension or correction of an old one, every hint and tip in any direction—in short, everything that reaches me—will be greeted with joy, accepted with gratitude, and conscientiously used according to my ability. And I ask that you give expression to conjecture no less than to wish, and above all never omit any information because of its apparent insignificance.

To almost all who have helped me up to now, that which they gave me appeared relatively unimportant. But to me, however, everything was valuable and thus has this book come about.

Saarbrücken, Rhine province [of Prussia]
Autumn 1897
John Henry Mackay

Note to page ix:

The 'Sunday literary society' "Der Tunnel über der Spree" (The tunnel over the Spree) was an important literary society that met regularly in a Berlin coffeehouse. It was founded in 1827 and lasted until 1898. Its name was taken from the tunnel under the Thames in London that had been completed two years earlier. Theodor Fontane, who was a long-time member, described the society in his autobiographical *Von Zwanzig bis Dreißig* (From twenty to thirty; 1898). The archive of the society, housed today in the library of Berlin University, contains some 13,500 items.

Foreword to the Second Edition

This second edition of my biography of Max Stirner already has its own little history.

I completed it two and a half years ago at the request of my old friend Benj. R. Tucker, publisher of *Liberty* in New York, who wished to publish it and naturally wanted to see it continued down to the latest research results. It was supposed to appear in his publishing house in English and actually—a rare exception—before the German edition. For the interest of the Germans in the life of their boldest and most consequential thinker was not enough to exhaust the first edition of my biography.

The manuscript as well as the plates of the pictures and handwritten pages were sent, the translation of Georg Schumm was in full swing, and the work was to go to the press, so as to appear in spring 1908. Then a terrible fire on 10 January destroyed the Parker Building on Fourth Avenue, in which, among others, Tucker's office was located, and with it his whole store of books, many valuable manuscripts, as well as all his press and typesetting material: a damage that, as far as can be reckoned at all, was valued by him as at least ten thousand dollars. This was a blow to our cause, which even the new work of many years will probably never entirely succeed in overcoming—and what will be felt the hardest by us all was the destruction of almost all the copies and all the plates of the just published English edition of *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* [*The Ego and His Own* was the title given it by Tucker], prepared over long years with such infinite care.

A continuation of the enterprises begun was given up for the time being. My manuscript, only by chance preserved from destruction, was returned to me, and I give it to the press now almost unchanged.

This second edition is enriched through the researches of the eleven years that have passed since the publication of the first in 1898.

I was long undecided how I was to make use of the results of this research. Two ways lay open to me: to integrate them into my book or add them in an appendix.

I decided for the second way. For the first would have meant nothing else than a tearing down and building up again of whole parts, without a guarantee that the construction of the whole edifice would not thereby be harmed. Many things would have had to be left out entirely and replaced by new ones, others again remodeled and enlarged to unrecognizability, and even if I had held the complete revision for the most correct, I do not know whether time and desire for such a great new work might not have failed me. Thus instead of integration I decided for the appendix, though some things were added in the text if they did not have a disturbing effect;

also, of course, a few smaller errors were corrected. But for the principal and most important of the new finds the reader has to supplement the text by the appendix, which I have been at pains to join to it as rigorously as possible.

The reception of my book was—I will make no secret of it—a final disappointment for me. I had expected that this time the name of Stirner would have impelled a deeper and more honest consideration. However, what was written by the "critics" was on the whole nothing other than an exploitation of what was found by me—and they did not always understand it enough to copy it correctly. A work that would be worthy of a serious refutation has not yet appeared.

They objected that I did not dig for the roots of Stirner's philosophy, did not show who his predecessors were in the history of philosophy, and did not investigate his influence up to our day. I reply that I did not want to write a history of the philosophy of egoism, but rather a history of the life of Max Stirner. I am no philosopher, and works such as those demanded lie completely far from my thoughts. Therefore only that criticism which showed me what other path I should have gone in order to reach my goal could have had value for me. Unfortunately, no criticism has been helpful in this connection, and I do not know, therefore, how I could have carried out and formed my work other than I did.

On the other hand, the hope that was the real drive for the first publication—to receive help from the circle of readers itself—was not deceived, to the extent that in 1901 Benedict Lachmann in Berlin emerged as a helper for me. I could not have wished for myself a better one. A native of Kulm, he believed he could successfully follow again the blurred tracks of Stirner's youth in the old town on the Weichsel River. His work, carried out through old connections there with as much energy and endurance as prudence, was then fortunately crowned with success to the extent that it not only uncovered the reasons why Stirner's stepfather moved his residence to Kulm, but—the finest result—also led to illuminating the last years of Stirner's life, as well as finally bringing also an authentic report of the sickness and death of his mother. It was Benedict Lachmann's wish to see the things found by him published here first, and I thank him cordially for the way in which he placed his whole material at my disposal.

It is also due to his efforts that a final personality has been contacted who saw Stirner face to face: Baroness von der Goltz in Berlin. Although she was still a child when Stirner frequented the house of her mother toward the end of his life, her memories of him are still sharp and lively. She has graciously confirmed the correctness of the picture sketched by me, but was unable to add any new features to it. The drawing of Engels she also explained as thoroughly unlike him.

Finally, these ten years have brought two new finds from the works of Stirner himself. One was made by Dr. H. H. Houben on the occasion of his Gutzkow researches and was first re-published by Dr. Rudolf Steiner in his *Magazin für Litteratur* of 17 February 1900. It is the review of Bruno Bauer's *Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts* and now the first known literary work of Stirner.

I luckily made the second myself. I was made aware of it in a place I would have least suspected—in the *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* [Memoirs of my life] of Friedrich von Bodenstedt (the singer of *Die Lieder des Mirza-Schaffy* [The songs of Mirza-Schaffy; Bodenstedt at first pretended that he was only the translator of these songs, but later revealed that he was the author])—when, two years after the publication of my book, I was plowing through a new mountain of literature collected in the meantime. Bodenstedt relates there how in 1848 as editor-in-chief of the *Journal des österreichischen Lloyd* he ended up in Trieste and found a prized collaborator in Max Stirner, who was "personally entirely unknown." Immediately made inquiries revealed that the journal named still existed in only one complete copy and that was in the Biblioteca Civica in Trieste, but under no condition would it be loaned out. A trip to Trieste was, however, only possible for me toward the end of 1904. Then and there, in the volume for 1848 of the journal named, I found eight articles that doubtless came from the pen of Stirner, even if not one was signed by his name. I copied them and for the first time again made them available to the public in the 1908 volume of the Berlin journal *Morgen*.

If a new edition should become necessary for the lesser writings of Stirner, published by me in 1898 (*Max Stirners Kleinere Schriften und seine Entgegnungen auf die Kritik seines Werkes: Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum. Aus den Jahren 1842–1847*), which today is unfortunately not the case, then these new finds would obviously be placed in it.

If, therefore, the gaps in the life that we are seeking are happily filled, and if the work of this life could be completed, then it still appears that the curious fate, which has made my work so full of disappointments, means to stay with it faithfully through a second decade.

Agathe Nalli-Rutenberg, the daughter of Adolf Rutenberg, the old friend of Stirner, whom chance led me to meet in Rome shortly after the publication of my book, did report to me many interesting things about the life of her father and his times, but was unable to add anything really new to my portrayals, and the written Nachlass of her father has been lost, like that of Buhl.

A last attempt to stumble on the Nachlass of Ludwig Buhl unfortunately failed. It was the most important of all, since it was supposed to contain at the same time the Nachlass of Stirner himself and with it certainly all the work on *Der Einzige*. The attempt was made through the friendly and interested help of the director of the Deutsche Genossenschaftsbank in Berlin, E. Werner, a cousin of Buhl. The uncovering of the intellectual legacy of Stirner probably must henceforth be definitively given up.

Even the hope of at least finding the manuscript of *Die Geschichte der Reaction*, was held by me only a short time. For even though I succeeded in reaching Clementine Wolff, the widow of the publisher Sigismund Wolff—he died in 1900 in Meran-Mais—in whose Allgemeine Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt Stirner's second and last work appeared, and even though I was supported here with the greatest willingness, it could only be determined that the manuscript sought had probably been in a

box that had been lost long years ago during a move, over whose loss the dead man "was never able to calm himself, since it contained important papers."

Finally, Carl Hippel, the son of the elder Hippel, that loyal friend of "The Free," does possess a picture of his father, yet in his Nachlass too the business books of the old wine tavern were no longer found. They would at least have been able to relate many interesting things.

Two other personalities were also named to me: the dramatist and novelist Karl von Heigel in Riva del Garda and Alexander Meyer, a well-known Berliner and author of the amusing memoirs *Aus guter alter Zeit* [From the good old time], both since dead. They were in touch with individual members of the circle of "The Free," without, however, having known Stirner himself. They too were unable to add to what I have given.

But with all this I may no longer doubt today that I have penetrated to the most hidden sources, and even if I will never tire of following up even the most unlikely trace that shows itself, new and surprising revelations may indeed no longer be expected.

The gaps that death has made in the series of my first helpers from the years 1889–1897 are terrible. Already during the printing of my book in 1897 the antiquarian Emanuel Mai died, and on its publication in spring 1898, Dr. Ludwig Ruge. Theodor Fontane followed them the same year; Immanuel Schmidt in 1900 as a consequence of an accident; the splendid old Alexander Kapp in 1902; Malwide von Meysenbug in 1903; Wilhelm Jordan, the author of the epic poem *Nibelunge*, in 1904; and Rudolf von Gottschall last year. No longer among the living are further: Dr. Gustav Siegmund, Guido Weiss, Paul von Szczepanski, as well as Dr. Albert Fränkel, who after being sent my book expressed to me again his great interest in the subject in a long letter. Death has also overtaken "Mother Heinzen," the widow of Karl Heinzen, and old Friedrich Beust and Henry Ulke, so that of the twenty-two names in the foreword to the first edition—those who had once been in direct or indirect connection with Max Stirner and were able to report to me about him—only four are still living today. How right I was when I said there: "Twenty years more and even the last personal memories will have been irretrievably lost!"

Now that Marie Dähnhardt is no longer among the living, Meno Haas in London has also allowed me to say that it was he who undertook the effort, as friendly as it was in vain, of being the connection between us. She received through him her small pension, so he saw her once a year. Meno Haas then also notified me of her death. The second of Marie Dähnhardt's old friends, M. Lippner in London, who told me about her, likewise never saw her any more and passed away in the same year that she did.

I may also say today who Szeliga was. Under the pseudonym Szeliga there wrote in the 1840s the then young officer, later General of the Infantry Franz Zychlin von Zychlinski, who died in Berlin in 1900, a very well known personality.

He was an old friend of Fontane, who in his usual gracious way arranged our acquaintance, which did lead to an interesting conversation about post-Hegelian philosophy, but unfortunately to no results in connection with my research, since Szeliga and Stirner never met. I may break the silence today that I was expressly obliged to at that time, since both the general and Fontane are no longer living.

Finally it may be pointed out that the most important of the letters that the unforgettable Hans von Bülow wrote to me are to be found in the eighth and last volume of the excellent edition of his *Briefe und Schriften* [Letters and writings], arranged by his widow Marie von Bülow.

This time too I cannot fulfill the wish of adding the sources of my work to a new edition, for the reasons already given. The whole, well-ordered material of my Stirner research will go after my death to the British Museum in London, and indeed go there because it will be available there to everyone—without the meddling into one's intentions and purposes favored by the large state libraries of the continent—also for checking my work.

I have also left out the plan of adding to this new edition a name and subject index, since it has been said to me from various parties that the clear ordering of the material makes such completely dispensable. On the other hand, the three newly added genealogical trees, as well as an overview of the stations of Stirner's journal through life, may be useful for finding many dates and names easier. [The genealogical trees have been omitted in this edition.]

It took twelve years to exhaust the first edition of this book. It cannot be hoped that, after the first interest has been satisfied and the first curiosity stilled, this second will sell out more quickly. Thus I will hardly live to see a third.

So I now take leave of my work, which, whatever it has brought me in disappointments and effort, still counts among the most precious achievements of my life, and is the one thing that at least no one can ever take away: to have raised with it a name and a work of immortal and no longer doubted significance from the night of forgetfulness into the light of our day and thereby all future days.

But if I must decide here to conclude this work outwardly, so to speak, my urgent request remains: to continue to help me also in everything that could still in some way lead to later additions, and not to leave out any tip or correction, also with regard to the present edition, because of its apparent insignificance (making use of the address given below). For even if it should no longer be possible for me to make use of this final help myself, it will not have been done in vain, but rather, will be added to the previous material and, as was said above, guaranteed for future research. It will certainly one day fulfill its purpose.

Berlin-Charlottenburg
Spring 1910
John Henry Mackay

Translator's Preface

All translation is difficult and translating Stirner poses its own problems. Mackay wrote in his biography of Stirner: "He has an extraordinary love of tracking down the meaning of a word and often exposes its ambiguity through the highly witty way that he uses it, a way that not seldom makes a translation of his sentences into another language appear as an impossibility." But Steven T. Byington's 1907 English translation of Stirner's book is brilliant. Wherever Mackay quotes Stirner—and I was able to locate the quotation—I have used Byington's translation and have indicated this by putting it in bold print. This saved me from having to make another translation. But I think it will also have advantages for the reader, for whom Stirner's book will be familiar through Byington's translation, and, since that translation is readily available on the Internet, the quotations may easily be found and read in context. In translating Mackay's discussion of Stirner's ideas I have also tried to conform to Byington's translation. This may give my translation a somewhat disjointed effect, but again may assist the reader who is already familiar with Stirner through Byington's translation.

The pages have been numbered to correspond with the original German edition. This does give the book an odd appearance, since some pages are longer than others, but may be helpful for the reader who wishes to compare my translation with the original. It also has the great advantage of letting me use Mackay's own meticulous index.

I have included only one of the several appendices in the original German edition, omitting the others partly from "technical" reasons. But I have left in Mackay's mention of the original appendices in his forewords. I have occasionally added clarifications or other bits of information in the text; all my additions are put in square brackets [thus].

In preparing this translation I have been greatly helped by three readers. Clair Norman made many suggestions that make it read more like English than my first, too literal translation. Dr. J. Edgar Bauer saved me from several errors in interpreting Stirner's philosophy and clarified certain points of German history, as well as pointing out errors in my translation. The keen editorial eye of Dr. Wolfram Setz saved me from several blunders and alerted me to the importance of some items that had escaped my attention, greatly improving the presentation. I am very grateful to all three.

Finally, I have to thank my dear friend Don Endy, whose constant moral support and concern for my welfare have made this work at all possible. Without him it would not have been begun; with him it has been a joy.

Hubert Kennedy

MAX STIRNER

JOHANN CASPAR SCHMIDT

Born 1806—Died 1856

We care for everything about great men and our friends, even the most unimportant things, and certainly whoever brings us news of them gives us joy . . .

Max Stirner [*Rheinische Zeitung*, No. 132 (12 May 1842)]

[Mackay discreetly omits the end of the quotation, for it continues: "and deserves our complete thanks."]

Introduction

The Story of My Work

The Story of My Work

1889–1914

The rediscovery of Stirner – Appeal – First disappointment – Threefold difficulty of the work – House and grave in Berlin – Slow progress and Stirner's rebirth – Marie Dähnhardt in London – The life of Max Stirner – The method of my work – We and he – The Jubilee Year – Path throughout the world – Birth house in Bayreuth – Final thanks – Closing word

The story of the life of MAX STIRNER cannot possibly be rightly understood without a knowledge of how it came about; thus I owe it to the reader no less than to myself to relate the story of my work.

It was in the summer of the year 1887, when I was buried in my study of the social movement of our century in the British Museum in London (I still know today: it was in Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus und Kritik seiner Bedeutung in der Gegenwart* [History of materialism and critique of its present significance, 1866], that I read the name Stirner and the title of his work for the first time. He had never been mentioned to me before; never before had I heard anything of a work of this kind. Although the note about him said little, still I wrote down the peculiar title of the book; I wanted to acquire it for myself sometime.

That happened, however, only a year later. I had not come across the name of its author again. Now I read it.

I need not speak here of the tremendous, incomparable impression that the work made on me then, as well as since on every new approach to it. As I got from the reference works the first sparse and obviously inexact statements on the life of the author, and also otherwise found no authentic, detailed information, but instead here and there short and only fleeting mentions of him, I made a firm decision to give a part of my life's work to researching this completely forgotten life.

* * *

I sent out my first appeal in spring 1889 and then in a more complete form in autumn, an appeal that a large number of newspapers of all kinds gladly distributed. In this appeal I addressed the request to

all those who still remembered the recognition that *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* had received in its time as well as those who had come into close or distant touch with Max Stirner. I asked them to share with me their memories of the forgotten thinker and his personality. Above all, I asked the owners of autograph writings, letters, and pictures to place them briefly at my disposal.

* * *

Very soon I became convinced that the work I had undertaken was in truth much more difficult than I had suspected. With the arrival of the first, sparse answers it was already clear to me that only a careful pursuit of every trace in every direction would make it at all possible to make my way in the maze in which this life lay hidden.

Not only a deep discouragement, but also a great disappointment gripped me, as continuing to press forward, I became more and more convinced how simply and uneventfully this life had been lived. I had expected something extraordinary in it and did not find it! Must such a great life not also have been rich in exterior, great events? I still did not understand it.

But, with each year, as I penetrated deeper and deeper into the doctrine of the work and with it into the knowledge of the life of the man, I was gripped by the shame of my own stupidity and I recognized that this life could not have been other than it was, and I no longer sought new and surprising activity in it, but rather to fill its gaps by quiet work.

Today I know that Stirner's life, far from standing in contrast to his great work, was rather the clear and simple expression of his final doctrine, necessarily came from it and without any exterior or interior contradiction. He was an egoist, who knew that he was one!

* * *

Three things above all caused the personality of Stirner to so completely escape the eyes of his contemporaries and those following.

The first is found in the great seclusion and quiet in which he—with the exception of a few years—spent his life.

The second is to be sought in the enormous change that the year 1848 brought the public life of Germany, and whose arrival meant no less a great change in the life of almost all those personalities who at that time made up the leading lights of radicalism.

The third lies in the typically closed character of Stirner, who on the one hand gave no information about his life, and on the other hand had none of those intimate friendships that, say, at the time of his brief fame, could have easily given personal sketches of him.

Together with other chance happenings, which I touched on in part in the foreword, and in part will relate later, these causes have made my work extraordinarily laborious, and I may dare say that every single fact of biographical material—piece by piece—has had to be dug out of the rubble of the years.

At any rate, it was high time: another twenty years and even the last personal memories of Max Stirner and his time would have been irretrievably lost.

* * *

Even if other works of mine often interrupted my research, I never lost sight of my goal, and slowly, quite slowly, one discovery after another brought about the longed-for reconstruction.

The grave, leveled to the ground, was found again, as was the house in which Stirner lived the last years of his life; the first, threatened by complete destruction, was acquired for another thirty years. And thus one thing followed another.

At the beginning of 1892 I returned to Berlin after an absence of many years, driven by the wish to carry out further research on the spot myself and possibly to bring it to a quick conclusion. I issued the announcement that I had in mind to place a memorial plaque on the house in which Stirner had lived and died, and also to place a tombstone on his grave, "so that these exterior traces of his great life would also not be wiped out by time." My suggestion found the most indifferent reception imaginable. Let me be allowed to remark here on the many erroneous ideas about my intention, that it was not sentimental piety, but rather the consideration of being able, in such a way, to make useful propaganda for the memory of the forgotten Stirner, which led me to my decision.

It was none other than Hans von Bülow, who supported my plan with his already so often proven passionate interest in all that was unrecognized. He had known Stirner personally, had always been an enthusiastic admirer of his work, and now did everything that he could to help the idea to become reality. Our contact in those days, which is unforgettable, led him to mention Stirner in his remarkable speech at the end of March at a concert of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, where he rededicated Beethoven's *Eroica* to Fürst [prince] Bismarck.

On 14 May, on the house in Berlin NW, Philippstrasse 19, a memorial plaque was placed with the inscription in golden letters:

In this house
lived his final days
Max Stirner
(Dr. Caspar Schmidt, 1806–1856)
the creator of the immortal work
Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum
1845

When this took place, I still did not know that Stirner had never been a Dr.

Therefore, should the occasion ever be offered to replace the plaque with another (on which the inscription, for the sake of better legibility, should be carried out in black rather than in light granite), then in the inscription the line:

Dr. Caspar Schmidt, 1806–1856

should be changed to:

Johann Caspar Schmidt 1806–1856.

The placing of the gravestone encountered great difficulties. The size of the only gravestone whose acquisition came into question—a very inexpensive bargain because of a hardly visible fault—somewhat surpassed the prescribed size, so that the stone, after an attempt to get permission to install it from the parish council had been denied, had to be cut down to 1.75 × 0.95 meters. All that took almost two months, and only on 7 July could the installation finally take place. The stone bears as its only inscription the name "MAX STIRNER" in large, golden letters.

Whoever wishes to look for the grave today will find it best if, after entering the Sophienkirchhof from Bergstrasse 32, he walks through the old section, staying always to the left along the wall, whereby, after reaching the new section to the right, he will come upon the massive granite stone—now closely surrounded by new graves.

Both works were carried out through a kind arrangement in the workshop of master stonemason Schilling in Berlin, who also was graciously forthcoming in lowering the cost.

The expenses for plaque and stone were 469 marks; the result of the collection, for the most part reached through Bülow's intervention, amounted to 438 marks.

I released a very detailed report of all this to everyone involved. Once and never again!—I told myself then.

* * *

In the meantime Stirner experienced a kind of rebirth. These public events, which often brought his name into the press, the dedication of my poems *Sturm*, and the reference to him in the introduction of *Die Anarchisten* [The Anarchists]—above all the great influence that Friedrich Nietzsche more and more exercised every day, especially on the young generation—drew attention to his book, which was again much read, often mentioned, and now has been made available to the widest circles through an inexpensive edition in the Reclam Universal-Bibliothek.

Nevertheless, I still could not decide to go public with my work. It always seemed to me as if by chance one or another gap in the life I was seeking had to be filled—a hope that at least in one case was fulfilled—and so I said a decisive no to all the invitations and offers directed to my work. The justification of my holding back will now, as I hope, be recognized.

Yet my work, slowly but surely, approached its final conclusion.

* * *

Then, when I thought seriously of closing the collection of material and beginning its composition, at the very last, it seemed to me as if the chance that I had long awaited in vain would become reality, as though a source had opened, so rich as to make in a moment the efforts of years forgotten.

News reached me at the beginning of that year, 1897, that deeply excited me: Marie Dähnhardt, vanished for decades and long believed dead, was still alive! I was like the gold digger who had for so long found only nuggets and now suddenly was standing before the richest vein!

I hurried at once to London, where she was supposed to be still living.

So that the reader will understand the following, however, I must ask him here first to acquaint himself with Marie Dähnhardt and her life after her separation from Stirner, as it will be described in the last chapter of this book, above all also with the complete change in her

outlook, which alone can make the following, if not comprehensible, then at least explanatory.

That I would not be received with open arms, perhaps would even meet with serious difficulties, I knew; that I would have to return to Berlin almost without a result, that I would never have expected!

For something wholly unexpected happened: Marie Dähnhardt, informed of my wish to speak with her and thoroughly informed of the reason and justification for this, which I believed I had acquired, heatedly refused to see and speak with me altogether.

"Why should she," she asked through her intercessor, "be called to be a witness for the life of a man, whom she had never loved or respected?"

Highly surprised and wounded, I only understood this bitterness to some extent when I received knowledge of the drastic change in her views, which had come about years earlier, of the life that she had led since the separation from her husband.

Yet I still did not want to give up my cause as completely lost.

Once again I wrote a letter to her: I described the years-long and relatively unsuccessful effort of my work, I assured her how far I was from giving any kind of glossed over picture of his personality, despite all my admiration and love for Stirner, but rather how my one and only purpose was to find the truth about his life; I suggested that she consider how very helpful she could be, without harming anyone; not once did I repeat my attempt to be allowed to see and speak with her, I only asked her at least to give me answers to a few written questions (which I included).

After what I had experienced in the meantime, I was even prepared for the rejection of this last request.

But she answered my questions—partially. Although in them she included neither new facts nor sources of any kind—most had been "forgotten" [in English in the original] by her—still her answers were of great value for me, and they are in my book, as every other information, only with possibly even greater conscientiousness in their evaluation—as far as was possible there.

For what was I to do? Should I set the new picture, as it so suddenly popped up before me, in place of the old one, which had appeared, feature by feature, without contradiction from the witness of so many others? Or should I leave this to stand as it was? I decided for the latter, but at the same time decided not to suppress a single one of Marie Dähnhardt's accusations, none of her bitter complaints. Thus it was done.

Only two of her answers are to be mentioned here. In one she said that Stirner had been too selfish to have true friends—it is not necessary to go further into this point, since this is done later. In the second, on the question of Stirner's character, she found only the one expression: he was "very sly" [in English in the original]. I leave it to the reader to translate this.

The sharp bitterness of this and her other answers, which for that matter were given only partly and incompletely, was made milder by no good word.

At the end of the sheet she wrote the lines that I give in an appendix in her own handwriting. [Omitted in this edition. She wrote, in English: "Mary Smith solemnly swears that she will have no more correspondence on the subject, & authorizes Mr. Bookseller Haas to return all those writings to their owners. She is ill & prepares for death."] After this explanation any further attempt at approaching her, even if it had been at all within the range of possibility, forbid itself.

I do not deny her the right to her way of acting.

But when she says that she had "never respected or loved" Stirner, then certainly the question appears justified, for what reason did she marry him then, since certainly no one had forced her or even talked her into it?

Nothing would have been more to be desired than that the appearance of my biography had brought her out of her decision to keep silent and allowed her to express herself once more and in detail on

her relationship to the dead man, before it was too late. She did not do it.

One thing is clear: she never understood her husband. Had she ever really correctly read the work that he dedicated to her? I doubt it, when one sees how no memory of its great truths could restrain her from sinking back into the night from which she had sought to rescue herself in her youth. Would this one thing not have had to bring her already to her senses? **"Do not call men sinners, and they are not: you alone are the creator of sinners; you, who fancy that you love men, are the very one to throw them into the mire of sin. . . . But I tell you, you have never seen a sinner, you have only—dreamed of him."**

Her ear had probably heard the words, her heart had perhaps once beat more quickly with them, but her understanding had never comprehended them, and never had they become flesh and blood in her actions. Therefore she could forget them down to her last breath.

And he? How could he have so deceived himself about the limits of her intelligence, the strength of her ability, that he set her small name beside his own before the view of the centuries? Was it a whim?—a joke?—the impulse of an hour? Or did he still truly believe then that she was strong enough to follow him through the cold and stiff regions to the highest heights?

I do not know. But no future edition of his work should carry the name Marie Dähnhardt anymore.

At the beginning of 1902 came the news of her death. It could no longer disappoint me that in her Nachlass not the least thing was found that had any connection with the time she spent at Stirner's side.

My book was sent to her. She did not read it, probably never even opened it. It was returned with the remark that "worldly things no longer concerned her."

Her picture stands unalterably firm: a person of the narrow bourgeois circle, drawn from it not through anyone else's fault (least of all Stirner's), but rather through a slumbering longing, nourished by the conditions of the time, for an interior and exterior liberation, and, all too weak to make use of what she acquired, returned to the dark depths of belief and superstition—a sad picture, not a tragic one.

* * *

It has certainly been a venture to want to describe the life of a man that was so hidden in the shadows of forgetfulness, and many would still call it so. But if courage requires an excuse, then in this case it is love of the cause. Without this love, to be sure, courage would have been mere presumptuousness; but without this love that which lies before us today would never have been obtained. No one else could have done this work.

The "Life of Max Stirner" can be divided into three periods: rise, height, fall. The first includes his youth and his life up to the end of his teaching activity (1806–1844); the second the years that culminated in the publication of his work (1844–1846); the third, the period of forgetfulness and solitude up to his death (1846–1856).

In the meanwhile, with regard to the first two parts, I have had to give my book a broader, more clearly laid out division.

I divided the first period: (1) the description of early youth and (2) his student and teaching activity. But I included the gymnasium period in the first chapter so as to remain in Bayreuth. Since this first chapter is based on external information and this has been almost completely recovered, I do not believe that in the future it will be made more complete in any kind of important way. It is hardly different with the second. Even though it was possible to exactly determine the time of his university study, that of the examinations and his first provisional position, as well as the dates of his first marriage and activity as a teacher of girls, there are still in this period of life two dark points, of which the second is especially disturbing. The first lies in

the years 1830–1832, in which Stirner was hindered repeatedly in completing his academic studies. But what were the family circumstances that hindered him? We do know that of these years one was in Kulm and the other in Königsberg. But which here and which there? The second gap occurs in the years 1837–1839. After Stirner completed the examinations and the required trial period his application for a position was turned down. We know when he married for the first time. But if we do not assume that he lived on a private income in those years, we are in the dark about his activity in that short period. We know almost nothing about his family circumstances.

The two years of the second period give a completely different picture. The human being whom we are seeking gains life and form. We know how he lives and see him among others. Rightly and from more than one reason these "others" interest us; and since they form a large, closed circle about him, a special chapter is devoted to them: "The Free" at Hippel's. Indeed, without them even the last personal remembrances of the person Stirner would have been lost! I will dispense with a description of the history of that time: Stirner, although he was its child, never took part in its public life and never actively participated in its course.

Through "The Free" we have finally come close to him and may say who he was: Max Stirner. He stands before us: still always in the reticence characteristic of him, but still in tangible form; and beside him is his darling, Marie Dähnhardt.

And from him to his work is no longer a step. The attempt has been made to understand in what his strength and significance, his immortality, lies—more than anything only an attempt that dare not go beyond certain limits.

The third period and the last chapter of the book coincide. It is the last decade of his life, the most remarkable and—most impenetrable. The living figure disappears from us. It is as if the shadows of evening are already spreading around it and only unclearly do we still recognize its outlines, although we know exactly where it is going.

Stirner's family has died out, his mother is long since incurably sick, he has separated himself from his friends—who would still know how to give witness of the man already forgotten by his own time?

He has gone and has left nothing behind except his immortal work. We have no picture of him; probably none such ever existed, for even Marie Dähnhardt had never seen or possessed one. His written Nachlass is lost and destroyed, as far as I know.

* * *

A word yet about the method of my work.

It consisted first in finding and collecting material. Indeed not only the traces of the one sought as well as every other that allowed even the gleam of a hope that it could lead to a path had to be followed to the last reachable corner. The literature of that time too had to be searched through on the off-chance of hitting upon clues. That this last—by its relative lack of success the most tiring part of the work—could not be done in every direction is self-evident, and therefore it is not improbable that others, who have to look through these masses of dust and paper with a similar goal, will here and there come upon the name "Stirner," even if hardly any longer among works that come from himself. It is precisely for these that the request of the foreword is once again repeated here.

The second, more agreeable part of the work, was examining and working through the material obtained. The false had to be separated from the true, the unimportant from the important, and above all a form had to be found so as to make the book readable to some extent, without surrendering the truth.

I hesitated for a long time, whether I should add the so-called "sources" to the results of my research. I refrained from doing it.

First, because I do not believe that the thoroughness of a work must be demonstrated through such an *ad oculos* [exhibit], and second, these countless notes, interrupting the text and burdening its pages excessively, would simply have put the readability of the book into question. For some pages not only every sentence, but often every word in a sentence would have had to be provided with such a "note," and the size of the book would almost have been doubled. To provide these notes in a new appendix, however, would have meant forcing me to break the text in an ugly way with countless numbers.

Nevertheless, I think the reader will "take me at my word" that all the dates and facts are as trustworthy as the most extreme care could determine them. Fantasy has been expressed nowhere, assumptions only rarely and then carefully expressed, for it seemed better to me to leave open gaps than to artificially fill them and thus affect the truth of the picture. Everywhere there were only individual facts that I could use; for many of them the sources from which they came had to be checked. Where I have directly taken over an expression that appeared to be so characteristic that I wanted to indicate it as the property of its originator, I have done this by setting it in quotation marks. Thus I can prove every fact and will do so, if doubt from any side should be raised publicly that appears to me to be justified. To all other attacks, however, I will as usual keep silent.

For those to whom the many details appear superfluous and ridiculous, for example, the recounting of many names in the third chapter, the dwellings of Stirner in the fourth and sixth, and other things, let him recall that precisely by making them known I hope to fill the many still empty places and I quite deliberately used them as an uninteresting, but perhaps useful means to the goal. It was precisely such details that, in the consequent pursuit of the method I adopted, made possible the results I aimed at.

* * *

It would go far beyond the frame of this book, and lie entirely outside my intention, to follow the influence of the weltanschauung of Max Stirner up to our time and be occupied with its regained place in it. Those are works that without doubt one day must be done and will be done, but not by me.

The first will be extraordinarily difficult. The influence of Stirner can be proved with complete clarity and unmistakably only in the case of those who have made their own his doctrine of egoism and who extend it in all directions, above all by showing in what cutting conflict this doctrine of self-rule of the individual stands to all theories of the state, no matter what form these have taken in recent times. Not that Stirner himself would not have taken any one of his ideas to its final point. But he had to be careful in his direct attacks if he did not want to destroy his work himself. Those who are carrying it farther are the individualist anarchists of the world. Not in their number, but in the importance of their members lies their power. With their efforts the first-named work must therefore be carried out in more detail and much more thoroughly than has up to now been deemed necessary.

Even less could the thought come to me to go into the handful of articles which the last decade has produced. Their authors have brought hardly more understanding to Stirner than the critics of the 1840s. There is no work that would be worth serious mention among them. Still the best are the articles that limit themselves to repeating Stirner's weltanschauung without attaching their own views to it.

They all proceed more or less directly from Friedrich Nietzsche. No one admires more than I the defiant courage of this thinker, his proud disdain for traditional authority, and the power at times of his language; but wanting to compare this eternally vacillating, muddled spirit, who is repeatedly self-contradictory, almost helplessly tumbling from truth to error, with the deep, clear, calm, and superior genius of Stirner is an absurdity not worth serious refutation. It is just

possible only in a time like ours, which in greedy haste grasps for everything that is offered to its unclear longing for the future. I have observed that most enthusiasts of Nietzsche speak of Stirner with a kind of cool and highly comical superiority: they don't really trust themselves to approach this giant and are secretly afraid of his rigid logic. With Nietzsche they need to think less: they lull themselves with his language, whereas the true Nietzsche remains mostly foreign to them. But dwarves are attracted to playing with crowns of lead. Let us allow them to continue to play. The fever of the Nietzsche-sickness is already collapsing. One day the "superman" will be shattered on the uniqueness of the I.

Whether Nietzsche knew Stirner and to what extent he was influenced by him, is a question that continues to be expressed, even in one of Albert Lévy's own writings, but which has now been thoroughly answered without doubt for every unprejudiced person through the memoirs from the Nachlass of Franz Overbeck published in the *Neue Rundschau* of February 1906, namely that Nietzsche knew *Der Einzige* and shyly buried in himself the overwhelming force of its influence, until he was able to free himself of it in his own creating.

Also the old disciples and friends of Feuerbach—Rau, Bolin, Duboc—are still making efforts from time to time to rescue their beloved master from Stirner and to cover up the ignorance that he himself has shown. It is useless effort. The Feuerbach man has long since passed away.

A few more remarks that I feel compelled to make.

If the philosopher Eduard von Hartmann raised the claim to have been the "rediscoverer" of Stirner, then it is completely sufficient to point to what he has said about him in his *Phänomenologie des sittlichen Bewusstseins* [Phenomenology of the moral consciousness] and his *Philosophie des Unbewussten* [Philosophy of the unconscious]. That was not what drew Stirner out of his forgotten state. A more recent, fleeting recognition of Stirner by Hartmann in an article in the

Preussische Jahrbücher of May 1891 on Nietzsche's "new morality," however, comes from the time when my speaking up for Stirner had already borne its first fruit.

Stirner and his work were, however, completely forgotten by 1888, and they might still be today, if I had not put in the strength of half my life for him. Suppositions, like those indicated, are therefore nothing but audacious and ugly falsifications of the facts, which I finally see myself all the more compelled to reject, since they seem to pursue a systematic goal: people obviously appear unable to get over the fact that Stirner did not owe his rebirth to a professional philosopher.

A rejection of another kind is due to the clumsy advertising by the publisher of an 1895 novel published in Dresden, *Feuersäule* [Pillar of fire], by Leo Hildeck (Leonie Meyerhof), which gives the impression that in the person and the career of the hero of this book the "earthly pilgrimage" of Stirner is described.

I can also not leave unmentioned the "brief introduction" of a Paul Lauterbach that preceded the Reclam edition of *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*. The deliberate bringing in of all possible "related" thinkers and uncritical quotations from their works can only harm more than help, and the confusion thus created remains all the more regrettable, as precisely this edition probably will remain the most accessible to a wider circle for a long time. In addition the affected style and deliberate playing with ideas of this introduction stands in an uncomfortable contrast to the transparently clear, chiseled language of the work itself. I'm pleased, therefore, that it is to be granted me with a new printing to replace this introduction by another of my own. [Mackay's introduction was published in the 1927 edition. Reclam's 1972 edition, the first complete edition after World War II, has no foreword, but has a 39-page afterword by the Marxist Ahlrich Meyer that does not even mention Mackay!]

The chapter "We and he ..." is a long one and the end will not be written so long as his influence endures.

I can of course only add here what appears to me to be especially characteristic of this influence in recent years.

It is already beginning to bring about its own books. As pleasing as this is, I must still on inspection of, say, that of a Dr. Anselm Ruest

(*Max Stirner. Leben—Weltanschauung—Vermächtniss* [Max Stirner. Life—worldview—legacy]), point out with a warning how daring and dangerous it is to want "to gain the picture of Stirner through hypothesis," and thus "to introduce him into history." What could have been easier for me, what could have attracted the poet in me more strongly, than to follow this path? If, however, my biography of Stirner—which I have set in the place of three lines that are not even free of errors, and which is constructed only and exclusively on the facts that were still to be found—possesses any kind of value, then it lies in the method of my work: to be modest where I must be modest. "Fantasy has been expressed nowhere, assumptions only rarely." [Mackay quotes himself!]

The named author, however, decorated his book (whose first part he has the courage to call "Life" of Stirner and which is based, of course, down to its smallest details on my work and can only be based on it) "with fantasy," indulged in the most daring hypotheses, and then has the lack of judgment to call this "filling with color and warmth." What results from this is of course not a picture, but rather a caricature. The legacy of Stirner, however, rests in the faithful and strong hands of the individualist anarchists, whose work the man making the hypotheses knows only by name.

Another, to be sure entirely different kind of attempt can only be amusing, that which Ernst Schultze made in the *Archiv für Psychiatrie und Nervenkrankheiten* in 1903, in which he sought to detect "Stirner's ideas in a paranoid insane system" and—if only just shyly—dared to draw the mental health of Stirner himself into question, whereby, he himself had to grant that Stirner's system, from a psychiatric standpoint, is "free of objection."

He supported himself thereby on the "psychosis that appeared in his mother in her 50th year" (how did he know that?), and from the fact that Stirner was without friends (which he astonishingly took, among other things, from the fact that Stirner is missing from my chapter on "The Free").

What does he say now, when he learns that Stirner was not hereditarily tainted, but rather that his mother suffered from an "idée fixe" and otherwise was thoroughly healthy in body?

Ernst Schultze's fixed, i.e., constant idea is that he considers right and rational what the majority in its laws declares right and rational, laws through which they seek to force the minority to believe in the concepts they have thus created.

That, of course, is his right. But it is at the same time the retarded standpoint of all, over whom the knowledge of our day, founded by Stirner, goes beyond to a higher level, in that it no longer entrusts the determination of the concepts of right and reason to force, but to freedom.

The lexicon of insults of Stirner and his work has exhausted itself in fifty years. The attempts to draw into question perhaps the clearest and sharpest intellect of all time and peoples should now stay silent—since, after those mentioned, they can no longer even claim for themselves any originality.

* * *

The year 1906 was, to speak in the German of the newspapers, the *Jubilee Year* in which Stirner's hundredth birthday and his fiftieth deathday both fell.

We may recall how completely unappreciated the latter event was at that time. Nevertheless it was well known. But the voices that would have pointed the way to a deeper perception were still lacking. Nowhere even today are the consequences of a weltanschauung drawn, which in the near future is certain to have such a powerful effect on our whole social life that its structure will be changed from the ground up. For there is still lurking in the meantime everywhere the cowardly fear of the "existing power" of human institutions and their holiness, and of the state. The individual still does not dare to set himself consciously against it and to demand the property of his uniqueness from it: his freedom.

Thus the best effect of that year was that it gave occasion to two witnesses from Stirner's time, Rudolf von Gottschall and Ludwig Pietsch, to return once more to their memories of him, even if they could remember nothing really new.

* * *

The "Jubilee Year" also brought the final completion of the wish long expressed from many sides that, like the house and grave in Berlin, so too the birth house in Bayreuth be distinguished by an inscribed plaque. I released an appeal, "as the last that remains for me to do for the memory of Max Stirner," in which I urged those for whom he had become so much to send a small contribution. The sum required then also fortunately mounted up and the firm Wölfel & Herold in Bayreuth was commissioned to carry it out.

On 6 May 1907 a plaque of black Swedish granite, 0.95 × 0.70 meters, was placed on the house No. 31 of Maximiliansstrasse, at Marktplatz, in Bayreuth, in my presence. It bears in large modern Gothic letters—recognizable at a distance—the inscription:

This
is the birth house of
Max Stirner
* 25 October 1806

In view of the inscriptions selected earlier for the grave and the death house, the composition of the words was carried out so that the three complemented one another. [The house was later remodeled and the plaque, which was originally on the front, was moved to the side of the house.]

The contributions amounted to 263 marks 91 pennies, the expense 283 marks 7 pennies, of which I gave an account to everyone involved.

The first, and until now the only, serious attempt, even if not entirely successful, to expound the weltanschauung of Stirner in its influence on the social questions of our time was made by a Frenchman, Victor Basch, professor at the Sorbonne, in his book *L'Individualisme anarchiste. Max Stirner* [Anarchist individualism] (Paris, 1904).

May others soon follow, which are not only attempts, but penetrating studies.

More than that, more than anything, however, the translations of Stirner into foreign languages announce, as incorruptible witnesses, how successfully he too has now finally started his path throughout the world.

They, no longer silent, call out over the earth how he has become ours and we have become his, never again to be lost.

* * *

Once again, for the third time, I have been allowed to take up again work on the construction of this life and add to it the final stones.

I know this will be for the last time.

I lay down the pen from my hand today with a feeling of inner peace.

Something striven for has been attained. And it is beautifully attained: with no other means than that of the strength of its own, inherent truth, and in the struggle against a world of madness and prejudice, built up over thousands of years—painfully and slowly, but surely.

That was what I said in my report on the installation of the plaque on the house in Bayreuth, something that twenty-five years ago I wanted, dreamed of, and desired, when I began my work for the reawakening of his life and his work. My last word here is one of thanks to all who have helped me, to each who made it easier for me.

* * *

The veil that almost impenetrably lay over the life of Max Stirner has not fallen, and we must probably do without ever seeing his figure standing before us—as if living—illuminated by the full light of day.

But still the veil has been lifted a bit, and this figure is no longer so foreign to us as it was; in certain moments we may even imagine being near him and hearing Stirner speaking from his work.

His life is a new proof that it is not those who make the big fuss of the day, the darlings of the crowd, but rather the solitary and restless researchers, who in quiet work point the way to the fate of mankind, who in truth are immortal.

Among them stands Max Stirner. He has joined himself to the Newtons and the Darwins, not to the Bismarcks.

Chapter One

Early Youth

Early Youth

1806–1826

Birth house in Bayreuth – Birth and baptism – Parents and ancestors – Death of father and remarriage of mother – To Kulm – Rittmeister Göcking – Return to Bayreuth and upbringing – Overview

Today in the city of Richard Wagner—in Bayreuth, which has still remained so entirely the city of Jean Paul—if one comes from the train station, climbs up past the renowned opera house of Markgraf [margrave] Friedrich to the old castle, and enters the Marktplatz—today Maximilianstrasse—his glance will linger a moment, among all the other interesting buildings, on the house on the left hand, which is decorated with a lovely, double-cornered bay.

This bay runs from the ground floor up to the roof. Apart from this, though, the brown painted house has nothing to attract the eye.

The narrow, two-story building dates from the eighteenth century. It is coarse and massive, with a cramped courtyard and narrow stairs, but has a bright, hall-like room in front on each floor. Originally intended as a bakery, it was used as such for over a century by its owners, all bakers.

It stands at the entrance of the Brautgasse or Kirchgasse, on whose other corner is the City Hall, and stretches far into it. Today it bears the number 31 Maximiliansstrasse and its ground floor serves as an ordinary beer bar. But the windows of its first floor up are adorned with friendly little potted plants.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century it was No. 67 among the 800 houses of Bayreuth and stood on the "main street" at that time. It was here on 25 October 1806, around six o'clock in the morning, that Johann Caspar Schmidt was born.

The child was baptized by Subdeacon Bumann according to the Evangelical Lutheran rite on 6 November; he received the name Johann Caspar after his godfather.

On his father's side the Schmidt family came from Ansbach. The "gentleman's servant" Johann Georg Schmidt and his wife Sophia Elisabetha, née Götz, had five children in the years 1762–1769, four sons and a daughter. The youngest son, Albert Christian Heinrich Schmidt (born on 14 June 1769), was Johann Caspar's father.

His mother, Sophia Eleonora (born in Erlangen on 30 November 1778), was the daughter of the former postman Johann Reinlein and his wife Luise Margarete, née Kasperitz.

When and where the marriage of his parents took place cannot be determined; but it was probably in the year 1805. Johann Caspar was their first and only child.

His father was by trade a "wind instrument maker"; he produced flutes. It is an unconfirmed rumor that he was also a portrait painter on the side.

Within a half year of the birth of the child, his father died on 19 April 1807 at age 37 of a hemorrhage caused by too great a physical effort. Two years later, on 13 April 1809, his mother married again. Her second husband was the manager at that time of the court apothecary, the almost fifty-year-old Heinrich Friedrich Ludwig Ballerstedt. The marriage was performed by the superintendent and city pastor Dr. Johann Kopp, and the married couple lived according to the laws at that time in community of property.

Ballerstedt came from Helmstedt, where he was born on 1 June 1761 as the first son of Dr. med. Karl Friedrich Ballerstedt and his wife Anna Juliane Johanne, née Göcking. His parents came from pastor families and lived later in Wolfenbüttel.

Directly after her remarriage the new Frau Ballerstedt left Bayreuth with her second husband and "after many changes of fate" went with him to Kulm on the Weichsel River in West Prussia. Ballerstedt went there at the wish and call of his great-uncle, Rittmeister [cavalry captain] Goecking (or Goeckingk).

In the course of the recent years 1806 to 1808, the retired Rittmeister of the Duchy of Naussau Paul Heinrich Ludwig Friedrich Günther Goecking had lost through death his three siblings: Ratsverwandt [councilor] Christian Valentin, Demoiselle Marie Sophie, both in Kulm, and Dietrich Theodor Günther Goecking, the pastor of the Tragheim Church at Königsberg. Being unmarried himself and approaching old age, he put an end to the "many changes of fate" of his still living relatives by his proposal that they come live with him in his house, "city property" No. 9 in Graudenzer Strasse in Kulm. He must have also added to his offer the promise to make them his heirs after his death, for already only a few months after their arrival, on 20 May 1810 he prepared a testament in their favor, which, after his death on 26 June 1814, made Ballerstedt and his wife sole owners of the house. In addition there were 40 acres of arable land and a garden, so that, with what the pharmacy also yielded, they could live without care and could give her only child the good education that he enjoyed. From her second marriage there came only a little daughter, who was born on 19 December 1809, probably right after their arrival in Kulm, and received the name Johanna Friederica. But she died on 21 September 1812, not yet three years old.

Whether Ballerstedt purchased a pharmacy or only leased it, and which of the two existing in Kulm it was, cannot be determined exactly. But the likely assumption is that it was leased and was the pharmacy on property No. 296, the Adler-Apotheke am Markt.

As soon as it was possible, in 1810, little Johann Caspar, who had been left behind in Bayreuth was fetched, and here in Kulm he grew up and received his first instruction. His stepfather became at the same time the child's guardian.

It may have been the circumstances in the house that made it desirable, it may have been the great reputation of the gymnasium in Bayreuth and the wish of his relatives still living there—whatever, Johann Caspar returned in 1818 to his home town as a twelve-year-old. Here he was received into the house of his godfather, after whom he was named, "Bürge und Strumpfwirkermeister" [guarantor and hosiery worker foreman] Johann Caspar Martin Sticht of Erlangen and his wife Anna Marie, née Schmidt of Ansbach. She was three years older than his father and his father's only sister.

The childless couple took him in place of a child of their own and he remained in their house eight years, until he left for the university. Their house was not far from his birth house and bore at that time the number 89; today it is No. 36 Maximiliansstrasse.

Some readers may also be interested in the various stations of the school career of the boy. They were as follows.

After the boy returned to Bayreuth, he first received preparatory instruction from the gymnasium student Imhof and then, in 1819, skipping over the Unterklasse, the thirteen-year-old entered right away into the Oberklasse of the Latin Preparatory School, where he received fifth place among 75 pupils. As "class teacher" he had Johann Melchior Pausch, whom he also had as such the two following years, 1820–21 in the Unterprogymnasium and 1821–22 in the Oberprogymnasium. He placed well in both classes, first as the 8th among 42, then the 6th among 29 pupils. Both years he was "praised by the reading of his name." In 1822–23 he came into the Unterprogymnasialklasse, where his class teacher was Prof. G. P. Kieffer, and he placed 6th among 25 pupils and received an "Accessit" diploma. During these years he was kept away from school for some time through illness. In 1823–24 he was in the Untermittelklasse, whose class teacher was Kloeter; he had 4th place among 15 pupils.

In 1824–25 the organization of the gymnasiums and the designation of the classes were completely changed. Schmidt was now in the 4th class of the gymnasium and placed 3rd among 16 pupils.

In the last year of his gymnasium career he was in the 5th class, the "Oberklasse." His class teacher was Dr. J. C. Held, later the worthy rector of the gymnasium. Among 20 pupils he had 6th place.

In autumn 1826 he made his Absolutorium [final exam], which obtained an extraordinarily favorable result. Among the 25 tested *pro absolutorio* he received the third place with the score of 15 and mark II (III), whereas the first place was assigned the score of 5 and the same mark II.

In his leaving certificate of 8 September 1826 he was given the mark I and the grade "very worthy."

This leaving certificate is signed by Georg Andreas Gabler, the director of the gymnasium at that time. This distinguished man had lived for some time in the Schiller house in Weimar and was an enthusiastic follower of Hegel, in whose teaching he "found the absolute liberation of his thinking and understanding." He was also called later to a position in Berlin. Unfortunately he was never Schmidt's class teacher. But still Schmidt had enjoyed his teaching.

Certainly one proof of how high the demands made on the pupils must have been at that time is the fact that Schmidt, although he was always counted among the best, still had to have private tutoring almost every year. In 1819–23 this was by a gymnasium student with the same name Schmidt, with whom he was probably not related, mostly in Latin; in 1823–24 by his earlier class teacher Prof. Kieffer; in the next years several lessons in French and music, for which he gave several Latin lessons in exchange; and finally in the last year several lessons in French and piano playing.

That is the path that Johann Caspar Schmidt took to reach his first goal in life; he was twenty years old when he reached it and his early youth lay behind him.

———

With these bare facts we have exhausted everything that we can say with certainty about his early youth, and it is really no more than what may also be expressed in the words: "He was a good and diligent pupil."

Coming from an ordinary family, there flowed in the child the unmixed blood of Upper Franconia, a sober, serious, clever, and somewhat slow kind of people.

His birth falls in the year that the city of Baireuth—as the name was written then—was seriously ravaged by the turmoil of the Napoleonic War.

The year 1806 began there, as a contemporary historian says, with "a sad present," to end with "a gloomy prospect of a fateful future."

In 1792 the Margravate of Bayreuth became Prussian; in 1806, the "most remarkable and last" year under Prussian rule, in November, it came under Napoleonic domination. Johann Caspar Schmidt was born therefore still under the Prussian: "Borussiae olim oppido natus sum" ["I was born in a town once Prussian"—from his 1834 curriculum vitae, written in Latin].

Everyone looks with fear toward the outbreak of a new war. The burden of billeting soldiers weighs terribly on the discouraged town. It is the year—from Candlemas over May Day to Martinmas—that a liter of beer rises from 3 to 4 Kreuzers, a pound of beef from 9½ to 11, and a Mez [= 3.44 liters] of salt costs 8 Kreutzers.

In 1809, when the Austrians follow the French, Schmidt's mother leaves the unfortunate town, like so many others, probably to escape the never-ending unrest and fears for life and limb. She traveled with her second husband far away to distant, foreign West Prussia. Her child remains behind, but will be fetched as soon as possible.

There, in his new home, he receives his first impression of life, and his first memories must later have been connected with the old town in the flat land on the Weichsel River.

In the year of an unheard-of inflation and hunger he returns to the old town. Yet now at least freedom prevails in the town, which in the meantime has become, and remains, Bavarian.

The godfather and his wife take the child into their simple household. He left no siblings behind and he finds no new ones. But what he finds is loving care, for it is probably right to assume that those who voluntarily take in children treat them as well as parents, who may have unwillingly had them. Parentes fecit amor, non necessitas [Love makes parents, not necessity].

Johann Caspar Schmidt receives his education at the very famous gymnasium; the heavy, broad burden of humanistic knowledge is laid on the young shoulders by serious, learned men.

But these shoulders bear the burden. In a smooth climb the adolescent reaches his first goal in life.

What kind of person was this boy? How did his first inclinations appear? How did his first drives in life express themselves? Where did they find nourishment and what was it? Did he enjoy the years of his youth in untroubled joy and strength? Or were they already made melancholy by the shadows of some kind of conflict?

In vain, in vain are all these questions!—As clear and definite as all the external data are, they are still only dead numbers, and dark and hidden behind them lies the hidden life that we search for in vain. We must take our leave of the boy without having answered the questions, to accompany the youth out of the confines of his first life into the wide world, which opens up for him with the beginning of his academic studies and which first leads him, and us with him, to the city in which he was to live, work, and die—Berlin.

Chapter Two

Student and Teaching Years

Student and Teaching Years

1826–1844

J. C. Schmidt, philosophy student, in Berlin – One semester in Erlangen – Journey throughout Germany – Königsberg and Kulm – Again in Berlin – End of study – Examination pro facultate docendi – As candidate for a secondary school position – Failed hopes for a position – Never gymnasium teacher, never Dr. phil. – Family circumstances and first marriage – Teacher of young ladies – Overview

Johann Caspar Schmidt arrived in Berlin for the Michaelmas term of 1826 fresh from Bayreuth as a young student of twenty. Another arriving student—Ludwig Feuerbach—had written to his father a couple of years earlier: "At probably no other university does there prevail such general industry, such a sense for something higher than mere student affairs, such a striving for knowledge, such peace and quiet as here. Other universities are real beer halls compared with the workhouse here."

Schmidt enrolled in the philosophy faculty on 18 October 1826. During the two years of his first stay in Berlin he lived the first year in Rosenthalerstrasse 47, the second year closer to the university in Dorotheenstrasse 5.

He drew here from the primary springs of knowledge at that time. A series of the most illustrious names, each of its bearers a recognized authority in his field, pass before us when we look through the certificates that almost everywhere testify to his "very industrious" and "attentive" attendance.

Thus Schmidt studied in the first of his four semesters in Berlin: Logic with Heinrich Ritter, the philosopher known by his independent historical-philosophical research; General Geography with the philosopher's namesake, the great geographer Carl Ritter; and Pindar and Metrics with Böckh, the famous rhetorician and researcher of antiquity.

His second semester was dedicated to philosophy: Ethics with Schleiermacher, the "greatest German theologian of the century," and above all Philosophy of Religion with Hegel—with Hegel, whose tremendous, then still unbroken, influence on the whole thinking of that time was such that we today can hardly have any kind of correct concept of it.

In the next winter semester Schmidt went to further lectures: he heard History of Philosophy and Psychology, and Anthropology or Philosophy of the Spirit with the same admired man. Besides that, he

again attended the lectures of Böckh and Carl Ritter: the former on Greek Antiquity, the latter on Geography of ancient Greece and Italy. And, so as not to neglect his theological studies, he heard Marheineke, the orthodox teacher of the Hegelian right, on Dogmatics and on the significance of the new philosophy in theology.

Likewise in the last, the fourth semester, theology came first: Neander, the church historian and opponent of Strauss, taught Church History and Christian Antiquity; Marheineke taught the Theological Encyclopedia and Church Symbolism.

Thus the industrious student attended up to 22 lectures a week, and in just four semesters in Berlin he must have laid a firm foundation for his later knowledge.

Having withdrawn from the university register in Berlin on 1 September 1828, Johann Caspar Schmidt then turned to the university in Erlangen, the town in which his mother, a Reinlein, was born and where her relatives surely still lived. But after completing his enrollment on 20 October he heard only two series of lectures in the winter semester: one with the well-known theologian Georg Benedikt Wiener on the Letters to the Corinthians, the other with Christian Kapp, the philosopher, on Logic and Metaphysics.

After the end of the winter semester he began a three-and-a-half-year break from his studies with an "extended trip throughout Germany," the only one of his life and one that probably stretched out through the whole summer of 1829. Without staying longer in Erlangen, he still remained enrolled there until 2 November.

Having returned from his trip, Schmidt went in the autumn of 1829 to Königsberg in Prussia, to the famous university, and enrolled

there on the date of the end of his enrollment in Erlangen. He lived at Steindamm 132. But he heard no lectures and did not apply for a leaving certificate; rather, he remained a year in Kulm with his parents because of "domestic circumstances," as he himself says. He spent a second year, "likewise in family affairs," again in Königsberg, where incidentally in autumn 1830, at his own request, he was released from military duty as a semi-invalid.

What kind of family circumstance these were that forced a break in his studies and kept him for so long far away in West Prussia—whether he could no longer receive financial support or whether the mental illness of his mother, which broke out later, was already then casting its shadow and drew him to Kulm—no conjecture can be substantiated.

At any rate, during his forced leisure, Johann Caspar neglected "in no way his philosophical and philological studies" but sought to continue his education on his own, whereby he certainly got ahead just as well and maybe better.

Only in October 1832 did the twenty-six-year-old—now grown out of his guardianship—return to his academic studies. He was again drawn to Berlin, from which he had been absent for four years. He took a room in Poststrasse 9 and, on the basis of his disenrollment in Erlangen and his earlier one in Berlin, he enrolled for the second time.

The extended plan of studies that he drafted shows how serious was his intention of taking up again and completing his studies: he wanted to hear lectures on the "Chief Epochs of Art" as well as on the "Mythology of the Ancient Germans," "History of Literature" as well as "History of Prussia." He also wanted to attend a public lecture of Carl Ritter and another such on Aeschines—but a long-term illness he contracted canceled all these plans. He only resumed the lectures during the next summer semester.

In that summer of 1833 he also heard a few, but important lectures, namely by the famous critic and philologist Lachmann, the master of methodical criticism, on Propertius, to whom Lachmann is known to have dedicated a special study; by the Hegelian Michelet on Aristotle's life, writings, and philosophy; and again, as years before, by Böckh, this time on Plato's *Republic*—and he applied himself industriously to all of them. Classical philology was, of course, the goal that, as a future gymnasium teacher, he had to manage above all, and in the face of that many a favorite inclination that he still cultivated earlier had to fade into the background, now that things were becoming serious.

In winter he still remained enrolled. He also intended to attend lectures by Trendelenburg on Aristotle's books *de anima*, by Raumer on Universal History, and by Michelet on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but did not. Instead, he prepared for the upcoming examination on his own. On 27 March 1834 he withdrew from the university register. He could now give proof of the necessary academic triennium with seven semesters at the University of Berlin—for the semester in Erlangen did not count in Prussia and in Königsberg he heard no lectures. This time too he was not "accused" of "participation in forbidden associations among students."

After Schmidt had allowed the Easter holiday to elapse, he registered himself on 2 June 1834 with the Royal Scientific Examination Commission for the exam *pro facultate docendi* and submitted his school and university certificates, as well as a *Curriculum vitae* in Latin. He applied for examinations in no fewer than five subjects to teach in the upper gymnasium classes, namely, in the ancient languages, in German, in history, in philosophy, and finally in religion; besides, "in the other subjects" also for the lower classes. Even for that time this was an unusual request; it bore eloquent witness not only to the applicant's self-trust, but also to the extent of his knowledge.

He was then given two papers to write, the first a "Latin translation, along with grammatical and exegetical commentary, of Thucydides VII, 78–87" and the second "On school laws." At the same time test lessons to be held on Horace Ep. I, 14, and "On Huss and the Hussites" were announced. The time for handing in the written papers was six to eight weeks.

But the candidate was unable to meet this deadline. In August his "mentally ill" mother came to Berlin suddenly and unexpectedly, and caring for her took up all his time, so that he had to apply for an extension of four weeks, which was also allowed.

Only toward the end of the year, on 29 November, did he deliver the papers; his own illness also delayed finishing them and now hindered him from personally handing them in. Therefore he requested that the test lessons and the oral exam be postponed until the new year. This too was granted and the oral exam was put off until spring of the next year.

The papers that Schmidt delivered were extensive: the translation from Thucydides contained 16 folio pages, the commentary to it 23, the paper on the school laws took 22. The judgment on the two will be given later.

Whereas the Thucydides translation can have only a limited interest for us, the paper on the school laws must attract our greatest attention. From this paper self-formed thoughts and views come to us for the first time, views that bring their originator closer to us than has been possible up to now.

Starting with the nature of laws, the young thinker says: "To be exact, every law is neither arbitrary nor accidental, but rather is grounded and at the same time enveloped in the nature of the object for which it exists. For every existing thing, be it in the world of phenomena or of the spirit, is as it presents itself as a simple thing in this or that characteristic form, and also, just for that reason, it is something complete in itself, rich in content, multiply divided through distinctions into which it decomposes itself. If these distinctions are emphasized and it is shown on them how and in what connection and

through what kind of fusion they necessarily belong to that simplicity of the object, then there exists in these analyses of the object itself how it is set in its unity, which is rich in content and distinctions, and they themselves reveal how they are the analyzed object, and thus reveal the latter in its analyses or laws. It follows from this that no law is given to its object from outside: the laws of gravity are the analyzed content of the concept of gravity itself."

School laws are accordingly—and with this he comes to his real theme—the analyzed content of the concept of "pupil." The interpretation of this concept makes up the content of the test paper. For even to attempt the presentation of actual school laws in spite of his slight experience appears to conflict with the modesty appropriate to him—he remarks with priceless, apparent seriousness in the final sentence of his paper.

The concept of the pupil is gained in a strictly inductive way, starting with the first age of the child, the stage of being isolated, existing purely for himself, progressing to the objective existence, where the child distinguishes himself from the surroundings and seeks to take hold of things in play. Now follows the most important period, the formation of the I of self-consciousness and the distinction from other I's, of intercourse with them, i.e., the sharing, giving, unfolding of his own I with regard to them and the learning from them. The child becomes a pupil. The teacher is for him the picture of completeness. He seeks to understand him, so as through him to come to some kind of understanding. This period of understanding also comes to an end and gives way to the period of reasoning, which has its beginning with university life. University means higher school only in a very inexact sense. "Instead of the teacher, knowledge presents itself in its pure form to the I as task and its field is freedom."

The tasks of the teacher, the school, and the "laws" are mentioned in concise sentences, but always derived from the nature of the object, i.e., the pupil, for whom they exist, in whose nature they are grounded and likewise enveloped.

The emphasis of the I flickers through the whole paper in flashing sparks; it already contains the thought which later is to light up the world far and wide like a blazing flame. In this sense we may indeed view it as the first foundation stone on which the thinker later erected the structure, whose form he still did not dream at that time.

As we recall, candidate J. C. Schmidt applied for a postponement of his oral exam, which was allowed. On 24 April 1835, a Friday, it finally took place and was continued on the following day.

In the examination commission were: Adolph Trendelenburg, who shortly before had been a professor at the University of Berlin; August Meineke, the well-known philologist and text critic, at that time director of the Joachimthal'sches Gymnasium [Berlin]; Friedrich Strehlcke, professor at the Köllnisches Realgymnasium [Berlin]. Likewise in the commission were Dr. Agathon Benary, the famous philologist, at that time upper class teacher for classic languages at the Köllnisches Realgymnasium. Lange presided.

The two test lessons had already taken place earlier, at the beginning of April. On 4 April Schmidt held the first, the historical one on "Huss and the Hussites," in the first class of the Joachimthal'sches Gymnasium and probably on the same day and in the same place that on Horace. A third was foregone for the much harassed man already during the oral exam, but took place on 28 April in the second class of the Köllnisches Realgymnasium on "Concept and use of the German conjunction." The judgments on all three were announced along with the oral exam.

On the first day in which the candidate began the oral exam, Meineke tested him in religion and Hebrew, Trendelenburg in history and geography.

The judgment of the latter especially was a very favorable sign. Trendelenburg recognized "the very secure knowledge of the individual subjects mentioned, as also the clear overview of general relations," adding that Schmidt had also shown in his historical test lesson (on Huss and the Hussites) a "good gift for lecturing," and so came to the judgment that he could without doubt successfully give historical and geographical instruction in the lower and middle classes of a gymnasium. He added that he could become "altogether a very useful history teacher," if he would occupy himself still more constantly and thoroughly with the study of history, namely in the sources. On the historical test lesson he issued the following interesting judgment: "The candidate did not enter into a discussion with the students, but rather limited himself to a coherent lecture, which in form and content was very successful. . . . The flow of the speech, in itself admirable, was almost overlapping, so that its evenness, which appeared to be well prepared, was almost tiring."

Meineke too was fair about the talent of the candidate. He attests to his familiarity with the general contents of the biblical writings, his facility in the translation of a New Testament text (I Cor. 13) presented to him, and his treatment of Christian doctrine—"although he did not succeed in developing one or another of the articles made available to him." Meineke also approved his treatment of church history, and he believed that, although religious instruction in the meantime could be entrusted to him only for the middle classes, including the Obertertia, still, it might be easy for him, "with his other competence as well as speculative ability," to give instruction in the field in the upper gymnasium classes also successfully, if only he would occupy himself more closely with the subject.

In Hebrew, on the other hand, the examinee showed only a very small knowledge and was hardly able to read the text.

The second day began with a test by Strehlcke in mathematics—the candidate's weakest side. Here he was able to bring back only

faded traces of the knowledge learned in school and therefore he failed. Since the mathematician Strehlcke was at the same time teacher of German, the unfavorable result in the one test cast its shadow also over the test in the other field.

Likewise, the test in philosophy, which Trendelenburg conducted, did not come out in the favorable degree that might have been expected. The paper on school laws had probably already left a not insignificant impression on him, for he had said about it: "The author seeks a deduction from the concept, wherein the influence of the newest philosophy is not to be underestimated. He has obviously accustomed himself to a step-by-step development and strict derivation of thoughts, even if the concept is to be understood one-sidedly by the often somewhat forced derivation. A greater completeness in the form is to be wished for here and there; for that which is incoherent in the newer dialectical presentations may not be allowed as a model."

But the test itself, which to be sure allowed the recognition of an "unmistakable talent in general and consistent handling of concepts," showed that "the positive knowledge in the history of philosophy in no way kept step with his ability," and that "a deeper insight into the mathematical method and with it a clearer knowledge of several logical relationships is lacking," so that from this one side it appeared dubious to hand over to him the preparatory instruction in philosophy and the direction of German essays in the first class, since the teacher must master the scientific outlook of the pupils.

In addition to this, the third test lesson, which was held afterwards, on "Concept and use of the German conjunction" likewise did not turn out as wished. "Even if the candidate," so says Trendelenburg, "made an effort to penetrate the subject philosophically, he was still hindered in a free and natural view by preconceived philosophical forms, which he arbitrarily applied to the subject. He delivered to the pupils contrived and in part forced distinctions and did not know how to develop the concepts in a natural and lively way in the pupils themselves."

The "artificiality of many a thought determination obviously confused" them.

All in all Trendelenburg believed that if the candidate got help for these shortages (in the history of philosophy and mathematics), "useful results" could be expected from him in the two disciplines, philosophy and German. Above all he reminded him "to fill the gaps mentioned through a thoughtful study of the sources, so that the philosophical direction of his thought processes would win a firmer base."

If Trendelenburg could have suspected that the "thought process" of this nameless young man was perhaps already then on the path that in its end was to let him gain his goal, not from a study of the "sources," but rather from the source of life itself—a territory that Trendelenburg and those lost in the skies of all possible and impossible speculations have never known how to picture correctly for themselves!

The final subject of the test covered the ancient languages and again Meineke was the examiner. If he had given an acceptable judgment about the Thucydides translation—he designated it as clear, simple, and fluent, and carried out with diligence and grammatical exactness, without being erudite—he was less satisfied with the test lesson on Horace. Although he granted the candidate his own understanding of the passage, he still criticized the slight didactical skill and the low degree of the method and ability to open up to the student the meaning of the author, as well as the dull and soporific lecture. In the oral exam too he missed the extent and soundness of grammatical knowledge that could qualify for instruction in the two upper classes of the gymnasium, and he only admitted that the Latin language, written as well as oral, had been handled with praiseworthy skill.

All these judgments were once more summarized in the test certificate of 29 April 1835, in which the candidate was formally granted the *qualified facultas docendi.*

That was not a splendid result, but still a very satisfying one, when one keeps in sight the extraordinary extent of the fields tested and the high demands that were placed on him. At any rate Schmidt

had shown the greatest gaps in the so-called Examenskenntnissen, the things learned by heart for the particular purpose; probably none of the examiners had any doubt about his unusual talent. In any case the result obtained thoroughly justified employment, without making another examination necessary.

As soon as possible after passing the examination Schmidt, as a candidate for a school position, applied to complete his pedagogical trial year and indeed selected for this the famous Royal Realschule in Berlin, whose director Spilleke was at that time also the director of the Friedrich Wilhelm City Gymnasium and the Elisabeth School.

Spilleke applied for permission from the Provincial School Staff. This was granted and at Easter 1835 Schmidt took over the eight-hour instruction in Latin in the Unterquarta.

As was said, it was the young teacher's own choice, to make his first attempt as an instructor in a Realschule. Since he had been reared entirely in humanistic studies, it must have attracted him to get to know the other side of the Real education [i.e., modern languages, science, and mathematics] at the source, although he probably already recognized at that time the one-sidedness of both and had laid the ground for the views that only a few years later he was to set forth in a profound and highly significant work with complete sharpness and clarity.

After his trial year was completed, he voluntarily continued the same instruction in the Unterquarta of the Realschule "from love of the subject and the institution" another half year, until the autumn of 1836.

Then on 1 November he left the school to which he had devoted a part of his effort for a year and a half without pay.

The next winter, 1836 into 1837, Johann Caspar Schmidt spent on new private studies. On 4 March 1837 he applied to the "worthy royal school staff of Brandenburg Province" for a salaried position. He had not dared to do so earlier, he declared, because of a "well intended consideration," since he had held it his duty, besides the time of his trial year, to use with the utmost conscientiousness yet another year to fill the gaps still visible in his philological and philosophical education. He "believed he had filled these gaps," he said, and added: "My circumstances do not allow me to take off a long time also for Hebrew and mathematics without applying for an occupation" and he closed with the assurance that in the meantime he "was determined to devote free time to them because of a duty to his profession."

After writing this letter, which was serious, honorable, and spoke so honestly of his egoism, he suddenly decided on 16 March that for now no opportunity for a position or occupation was possible; moreover it was "because of the latter" that he intended to turn to the gymnasium directors.

Whether he still made this attempt is doubtful; there is no proof of it and it was by no means accompanied with success. He never had a real position in a state school and against the definite statements of the encyclopedias let it be once more expressly emphasized here: *Schmidt was never a gymnasium teacher.* If he so named himself in later years, when he had long given up every educational activity altogether, he was only following the general custom that applied this designation in contrast to the teachers in the Volksschule.

This may also be the occasion to set aside another error. As reasonable as it seems and as easily as it certainly would have been for him to acquire the doctor's degree, Schmidt never made the attempt to receive it, as has been established. He himself caused this error by occasionally adding this title to his name on police registrations, *yet he was never Dr. phil.*

What Schmidt undertook to be able to live, after the collapse of his hopes, cannot be said for the time immediately following. We only know that in this summer of 1837 his stepfather Ballerstedt in Kulm died (on 19 July) of old age infirmity at age 76 and it is more than probable that the death called him there.

In the meantime, even before the death of her second husband, his mother, who suffered from an "idée fixe," had left Kulm and, probably against his wish, had come to him. We already saw her in Berlin in August 1834. Whether she remained in Berlin until she entered the Charité [university medical school and hospital in Berlin], which took place on 28 January 1835, or had once again returned to Kulm is not known. At any rate, she remained here, in the Charité, until 28 July 1836, when she was released "with indefinite leave as uncured" to live in Chausseestrasse (c/o Gaede) until 17 October 1837, and then in the private insane asylum on Schönhauser Allee 9, which at that time belonged to a Frau Dr. Klinsmann. She remained there until her death.

After the death of her husband in 1837 Frau Ballerstedt was his sole heir. The inheritance included the house no. 9 in Kulm, but the town treasurer Wach was appointed guardian for the "idiotic widow."

His mother was now Schmidt's only still living relative, and if the inheritance from his stepfather, who had long since given up his occupation as a pharmacist and led a very withdrawn life with his wife in Kulm, was not large, she was entirely dependent on it.

His godfather Sticht, the hosiery worker in Bayreuth, had also died in 1835 and at the beginning of 1838 his widow, Johann Caspar's aunt on his father's side, followed. Thus he lost his last close relatives.

There is another family event that was to bring change into his life and which next claims our interest: his first marriage.

When Schmidt, after recovering from an illness, again eagerly took up his studies at the university at Easter 1833 to complete his studies, he moved from Poststrasse to Neuer Markt no. 2. There he lived, two flights up, with the city midwife D. L. Burtz. Her daughter (or sister?), who likewise was later trained as a midwife, Caroline Friederike Burtz, had an illegitimate daughter Agnes Clara Kunigunde Burtz, who was born on 26 November 1815. Between her and the new renter a relationship was formed in the course of the next year. It led to marriage, however, only in 1837.

On 12 December the marriage took place between him and the now twenty-two-year-old bride, who, like him, was of the Evangelical [Lutheran] faith. The preacher of St. Marien in Berlin presided. The young wedded couple moved first into a dwelling in Klosterstrasse 5/6; then, a few months later, on 6 April 1838, to a similar one in Oranienburger (Communal?) Strasse 86.

Here the young wife died in childbirth on 29 August of a premature delivery, at the age of 22 years, 9 months, and 3 days. The skill of those attending her was unable to save her or the child.

It had been a quiet, harmless, dispassionate married life the couple led. Just as they had come to know one another in the calm uniformity of days, so too they continued to live, and the marriage probably brought little change in their contact with the outside world.

The sad death quickly and unexpectedly put out the quiet flame of this calm happiness, if it may at all be called thus. It would certainly have continued to draw nourishment from itself in undemanding contentment and would have been dissolved when the time came.

After the short break, the lonely widower again took up his former life.

The older woman Burtz, along with her daughter, the "Demoiselle," who had now also established herself as a city midwife, had likewise changed dwellings. Schmidt now also joined them at Neue Friedrichstrasse 79 on 5 October, and again, like a bachelor, the

young widower lived with the two women, this time too for several years, until a new marriage once again was to separate him from them.

Schmidt had long since definitely given up getting a state position. But since he had to rely on his earnings as a teacher, he had to decide to accept some kind of private position. He found such in a "Teaching and Educational Institution for Young Ladies" of Madame Gropius at Köllnischer Fischmarkt 4, which he joined on 1 October 1839. He worked there without a break for five years.

The school was a well-founded, respected private institution for adolescent daughters from well-to-do circles, which was directed by the owner herself and her sisters with the help of several teachers. Schmidt at first taught the first class two hours in the German language. In an examination on 2 March 1840 he tested his 13 pupils in the history of literature, above all the Silesian school of poetry. "The conversation was pleasant and gave a gratifying result." After two years the school was taken over by Fräulein Zepp, a former pupil of Mme. Gropius. Schmidt taught in the second class together with the woman in charge, and in the following year he also taught history in the first class with 7 pupils.

By his pupils, whom he assigned "many and long essays," as well as by the women in charge, his constantly polite and calm nature was well loved and appreciated.

To their astonishment, on 1 October 1844 he unexpectedly and suddenly resigned, never again in his life to have a public position of any kind.

To describe why and under what circumstance this happened will be covered in another chapter, as well as the description of his final and most important years.

But first let us take a quick look backwards and review once more in broad outline the years that covered the external development of his life to the moment when it so remarkably distinguished itself—and separated him—from others.

These learning and teaching years, which could be set down again in such sharp outlines, almost without gaps, undoubtedly form one of the most important epochs of this life. They include the whole development of the man and lead him to the threshold of a public life. He still had not opened the door to it, but he already had laid his hand on the door handle.

The youth was twenty years old when he went to the university as a *mulus* [someone who has just finished his final school exam] with joyful hopes; the man was thirty when he realized that all the effort of his youth could not help him get a position in which he could earn a living.

A restless, often interrupted study time, in which the high point is probably that trip throughout Germany, but which on the whole always suffered under the pressure of family circumstances; an arduous examination which illness kept him from preparing for; a hardly stimulating trial period as teacher without pay—that is the content of those ten years.

Great discouragement was the result. We hear of no new attempt for a position after the first attempt falls through. We only know of his quiet marriage, which death so suddenly ended.

Years of calm teaching in a private institution followed, but at the same time years which brought to maturity the fruit of this life.

How the ground on which it grew prepared itself, we can only guess. For, just as over his first years, so too there lies over his later years of learning and teaching that veil which reveals only the outlines. Until now not a single living witness to this life has arisen. Only facts, no human beings have spoken. Only now, approximately with the year 1840, do they appear and give the silent form warmth and expression. It comes to life and speaks to us through their memories.

We leave the teacher Johann Caspar Schmidt.

But before we turn to the man who will again appear before us as Max Stirner, we have to occupy ourselves—in detail and with interest—with that circle in which his life was to be played out from now on for many years, from which the witnesses come through whom he now speaks to us, and which forms the natural frame for the later picture.

Chapter Three

"The Free" at Hippel's

"The Free" at Hippel's

In the Fifth Decade of the Century

Hippel in Friedrichstrasse – First beginnings of "The Free" – Characteristics – The inner circle – The wider circle of visitors – Three guests – "The Free" in public – Tone of the circle – Its significance

In the first decades of the previous century there was at house No. 94 in Friedrichstrasse in Berlin one of those simple, but tasteful and cozy wine bars such as still appear to us today, say, in the famous Habel's on Unter den Linden. The house is still standing and is almost opposite the middle facade of the present Central-Hotel.

Its owner had a good reputation as wine handler in Berlin. Already the old J. M. R. Hippel had owned the business for decades; then his widow ran it for several years before she handed it over to her son Jacob Hippel in 1841.

Around this time, perhaps a year later, a group of men began to meet every evening in this wine bar. It was made up of very disparate individuals, who had only one thing in common: they were more or less dissatisfied with the political and social conditions of the time and were fighting against them more or less fiercely in public.

This outspoken "extreme left" in the great intellectual movement of that time was called "The Free" (since everything in the world must have a name) and under this name the group obtained a certain fame in the history of the pre-March period [from 1815 to the revolution of March 1848], which was principally connected with the activity of several of its members.

In fact, the first beginnings of "The Free" did not date from Hippel. But Hippel's wine bar soon superseded all other bars in the favor of this group and the members remained unwaveringly true to it for a long time. And since the name Hippel has been closely tied with that of its most interesting member, the bar justly deserves its place in this

description, even though it has gained only a modest footnote in the cultural history of those days.

At the beginning—right after 1840—we find "The Free" in the heart of Berlin, in the old Poststrasse. There, behind Nicholas Church on the corner of Eiergasse, was a beer tavern "Zum Kronprinzen," whose proprietor was said to have the name Kernbach and in whose roomy, but low and "sparsely lighted" guestroom the first regular gatherings took place. Likewise in Poststrasse, in the "Alte Post," the newspaper publishing house, was another bar, the wine tavern of Walburg (or Wallburg), which was the preferred regular place of some of the group. Before the transfer to Hippel's, it too was said to have exercised a great attraction.

Also a beer bar in Kronenstrasse was said to have often served for the first meetings of the "Athenäer und Freunde des Volkes" [Athenians and friends of the people].

Yet all these beginnings are lost in the darkness of time, and their first traces have been almost totally erased.

To characterize "The Free" in a few words is not very easy.

They did not form a "Verein" [organization, society, association] at all, even if they were often characterized and misunderstood as such. They never claimed such an appellation: they never had a "president" and never drew up rules or statutes.

Having started without any determined purpose, the group held together only through the mutual participation of its members. The interest of many was probably concentrated on the "inner circle" of those who once belonged to the steady visitors and so entirely of itself made up the "Stamm" [regulars], who, at least in part, drew attention above all to themselves and their name through their openly carried out battle with the conditions of the time. The larger circle of this group was still interesting enough to contribute to its reputation. It was enormously large, and when we look at the long list of names, it

is difficult to keep one's bearings in the colorful and surging number of those coming and going. First of all there were of course the liberal journalists, who must have felt themselves drawn by the rich mental agility of its members, which offered them ever new material for stimulation. The political debates that began in the reading room and at Stehely's confectionery in the afternoon continued into the night at Hippel's; there were the writers and poets, who got drunk on the words shouted there that almost appeared to give rise to the coming time; there were young students who listened to the truth on a massive scale—certainly something that was not preached to them from a lectern.

Further, there were the clever and sharp minds who, tired of words and waiting, believed they could bring everything about with the establishment of freedom and free trade; there were several officers whose horizon went beyond women and horses and who were daring enough to mix casually in the circle that was so disreputable to those "higher up"; finally there was a large, colorful flock of guests of all kinds, who came and went, came again and stayed away, and—last not least [in English in the original]—there were the ladies, who were, of course, not treated as such but as good comrades and were not offended by frank talk.

The greatest part of the company consisted, at least in the beginning, of young people between twenty and thirty years of age, and even Bruno Bauer, one of the oldest, had at that time hardly passed thirty.

Everyone longed for a new time and enthusiastically called for it.

Who, now, were "The Free"?—"I want the names, the names!"

They were the "scattered volunteer corps of radicalism," who—in eternal feud with their surrounding circumstances—assembled under this banner for informal contact and above all gathered around

one man whose name at that time had a widely known, feared reputation: Bruno Bauer. The astute Bible critic had his position as Privatdozent [lecturer] on the theological faculty in Bonn taken away in spring 1842 and had returned to Berlin, in order to fight his further battles here in association with his brother Edgar. His dismissal had aroused an enormous sensation, and the eyes of the public were directed on the intrepid man. In Berlin "The Free" now gathered anew around him, who was ahead of them in fame and years, and so much was Bruno Bauer regarded everywhere as their real leader, that it is only fair here too, in our examination of *the inner circle* of "The Free," that he be given the first and largest place.

The Bauers' father ran a small porcelain business in the second decade of the century in Taubenstrasse near Trinity Church. He had come to Berlin from the Altenburg town Eisenberg to give his sons as good an education as possible. Egbert and Bruno (born in 1809) were still children, the third brother Edgar was born in 1820 only after the family moved to Charlottenburg.

Bruno, absolutely the most gifted among his brothers, with a restless, critical mind, studied in Berlin in 1827 and the following year theology under Marheineke and Schleiermacher, but above all philosophy with Hegel. In the beginning he was an enthusiastic Hegelian. He received his degree in 1834 in Berlin in the theological faculty, a protégé of Minister Altenstein. He belonged to the circle of young people around Bettina [von Arnim], who conducted studies for her among the poorest of the poor in Berlin's Vogtland [a poor section of Berlin]. Soon he began his literary career with a criticism of [David Friedrich] Strauss's just-published *Das Leben Jesu* [The Life of Jesus], which had caused great excitement. Bauer still believed he could combine "historical revelation" with "free self-consciousness."

That he soon realized this belief was an illusion can be seen in his critical activity, which led him away from old-Hegelianism and far beyond Strauss to the criticism of the Synoptists of the Gospel and

to the exposure of the inner contradictions and the whole inconsequence of Hegelian philosophy in his anonymous brochure *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel den Atheisten* [The trumpet of the Last Judgment against Hegel the atheist], and further led to his dismissal as Privatdozent in Bonn. Minister Altenstein had already dropped his protégé when he moved more and more "toward the left."

Bruno defended himself in brilliant fashion in his "good cause of freedom" and continued to develop himself. He acquired a cigar shop in Charlottenburg for his brother Egbert, which was connected with a publishing business, where his and Edgar's books were published, and soon a very important publication emerged, the *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung* of 1843–1844.

The movement of "Criticism," called into being and led by him, restlessly hurried over friend and foe. Vehement battles appeared in this organ. They were fought with as much vehemence as talent for the "absolute emancipation" of the individual, who however was not allowed to abandon the basis of "pure humanity." The enemy, against whom the battle was waged, gradually became the "mass." With this battle cry, the criticism that had "become critical" and "absolute," after overcoming theology, combined together the totality of efforts inimical to the "spirit" "in place of all the individual forms of limitation and dependence."

For "critical criticism" the "mass" meant the radical political efforts of liberalism of the early 1840s as well as the social movement awakening at that time, in whose communistic demands it rightly saw an extreme threat to "self-consciousness," to personal freedom. The other side struck back: Marx and Engels, who had left Berlin and "The Free," published it in their spiteful pamphlet of 1845 *Die heilige Familie, oder Kritik der kritischen Kritik. Gegen Bruno Bauer und Konsorten* [The Holy Family, or Critique of Critical Criticism. Against Bruno Bauer and Company].

The *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung*, which probably proceeded all too businesslike in its critical executions, could not keep going, and, since the "mass" itself was gradually beginning "to become critical" Bruno Bauer again turned to historical and contemporary historical works. In the course of the next years' rich and fruitful activity, partly supported by Jungnitz and his brother Edgar, he produced a long series of volumes. Later, after the revolution, he again took up the Bible criticism that had made his name famous.

The movement of criticism had already died out. In the end Bruno himself had proclaimed its "meaninglessness" and with this he offended the last of his followers, so that they too fell away from him.

To return to the "Holy Family": That is what the circle was derisively called that formed around Bauer in Charlottenburg. For the most part it was made up of the few collaborators of the *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung*. They often received reinforcements and additions to membership from "The Free," and summer outings were made in common from Charlottenburg to the "Spandauer Bock," the little house on the moor. Incidentally, the "Holy Family" was essentially separate from "The Free." The female element was predominant in it at times quite significantly, and conspicuous appearances, such as that of Louise Aston, brought life enough into the quiet, peaceable house, where the brothers worked with unceasing industry, while the porcelain-painter father bound the books into bales with Egbert and the businesslike old mother sold cigars up front in the shop.

Bruno's brother Edgar, who was eleven years younger, had studied theology on his own initiative at first, but then, for practical reasons, turned to law. He did not possess the intellectual significance of Bruno and for a long time remained completely under his influence. That explains the many changes in his views.

Like Bruno, he was at first a collaborator of the *Hallisches Jahrbuch* of Ruge (from 1838). His first writing was a defense of his brother on the occasion of the latter's dismissal. Any public position in Prussia was now forever closed to both of them.

One year later a prolonged legal proceeding was begun against him because of his sharp and courageous work *Der Streit der Kritik mit Kirche und Staat* [The controversy of criticism with church and state]. It ended with his sentence of three years in prison, which he served from 1846 in Magdeburg. Like Bruno, and hardly less fruitfully, even if less thoroughly, he occupied himself there with historical writing. Then, after he was released, he plunged into the movement of the revolution years—again in Berlin.

The writer Ludwig Buhl should be ranked third in the circle of "The Free." Whereas the names of the Bauers, especially Bruno's, still has a certain prestige today, Buhl is as good as forgotten, and his writings would be hard to bring to light again. And yet—"a strong, robust nature in a weak body"—he did not lag behind the Bauers in critical sharpness. He surpassed both in the sharpness of his vision of the contemporary political situation. He was one of the first to recognize that criticism had to be directed not against this or that form of the state, but rather against the essence of the state altogether, in order to gain any kind of practical results. He demonstrated this view first in his *Berliner Monatsschrift* (which will be discussed later), after he had already considered social-political questions repeatedly in his 1842 journal *Der Patriot*, which was soon banned, as well as in his writings on the constitutional question and in his book *Die Herrschaft des Geburts- und Bodenprivilegiums in Preussen* [The dominance of the birth and land privilege in Prussia]. He was an excellent translator, e.g., of the *Histoire de dix ans* [The history of ten years] of Louis Blanc, "where he translated every 'dieu' with 'Vernuft' [reason]," and in spite of the haste with which he wrote his works he was a careful stylist. Even today his translation of Casanova's memoirs is regarded as matchless.

Buhl (originally Boul) came from the French colony and was born in Berlin in 1814. He was imprisoned numerous times, once because of his writings, another time for an ironic cheer for the police; he was once three weeks, once three months, and once even a year in prison. If he was not having to serve some kind of punishment, then he was to be seen at Hippel's, one of the most faithful visitors—and one of the loudest.

Senior in the circle and next to Bruno Bauer one of its most respected and most important was the gymnasium teacher Carl Friedrich Köppen, who taught in the upper classes of the Dorotheenstädtische Realschule at the beginning of the 1840s. He frequented Hippel's for many years, was close friends with the "leaders." "It could not fail that a lost echo of the inspired-fantastic symposia that they held together reverberated at times in the conversations of the teacher with the pupils," said one of these pupils in grateful memory of the excellent and universally respected man. According to trustworthy witnesses, however, Köppen is said to have quite soon abandoned the circle, since he did not feel himself sufficiently intellectually akin to them.

A colleague of Köppen, often with him at Hippel's, was the seminar teacher Mussak, who was without formal studies, but with a social education. He collaborated on the *National-Zeitung* and, when forced out of it, became the editor of the *Deutsche Reform*.

Among the most regular guests at Hippel's was the literary figure Dr. Eduard Meyen, who was born in Berlin in 1812, studied philosophy and philology there and in Heidelberg, and later devoted himself exclusively to literary activity. This led to very industrious collaboration on very different journals—on the *Hallisches Jahrbuch*, as well as to taking over the editorship of the *Litterarische Zeitung*. However, he left no examples in any autonomous work. Meyen was a respected, honorable daily journalist. How sharp his pen could be was seen already before 1840 in his polemic against the historian Heinrich Leo, the "verhallerte Pietist" ["verhallerte" because greatly influenced by the writings of Karl Ludwig von Haller]. Incidentally, Meyen was the uncle of the poet Alfred Meissner.

In body if not intellect the journalist Friedrich Sass, a native of Lübeck, towered over all the others; because of his two-meter [= 6½ feet] figure he was mostly called "the tall Sass." He was a competent journalist and through his brochures, which he wrote under the pseudonym Alexander Soltwedel—a name he kept for a long time—he inspired the first impetus to the construction of a German fleet. For a long time he was also the publisher of *Der Pilot*. His most extensive work, *Berlin in seiner neuesten Zeit und Entwicklung* [Berlin in its latest period and development] (1846), is not without value. It shows,

however, how little pain he had taken to penetrate into the intellectual circle of thought of his friends at Hippel's.

But it was not this work that has kept him in the memory of the time. Rather it is the droll lack of embarrassment of the successful popular melodies, such as the "Lieder" on Mayor Tschech [whose attempt to assassinate King Friedrich Wilhelm IV in 1844 failed] and the murderer Kühnapfel, which are supposed to have come from him. The "tall Sass," also called "Literarchos," was a constant coffee guest at Stehely's and often frequented "The Free," whom he made the target of his wit just as he did *Kladderadatsch* later.

Another journalist, but much more talented, and at the same time a bit of a poet whose nature was not without a trace of greatness, was Hermann Maron. From a very good family, spoiled from childhood, but without enough to live according to his inclinations, life brought him early disappointments. He must have frequented Hippel's in later years, when the company had already begun to break up.

Dr. Adolf Rutenberg, the brother-in-law of the Bauers, was a regular visitor. He was an old member of a student fraternity, had come over from the *Rheinische Zeitung*, and was adverse to all philosophy, but was an active writer for the daily papers.

For a time, Dr. Arthur Müller, who edited *Die ewige Lampe* in 1848, was supposed to have been a frequent visitor.

A further visitor among "The Free" was Lieutenant Saint-Paul. Sent as a censor to Cologne to observe the *Rheinische Zeitung*, he much preferred cozy evenings with its editors. When it folded, he returned to Berlin. He was one of the liveliest of the whole circle and inwardly concerned himself very little about the tendencies of "criticism." He just wanted to amuse himself with them.

Ludwig Eichler also belonged to the inner circle. He was a man with a bushy red beard and a shabby green wool coat, and was often called to be a public speaker because of his mighty voice. He was a virtuoso at living simply and in translating French novels. He was a thoroughly decent character.

There was also a certain Lehmann, called "Zippel," a philologist who hid his "weak romantic poetic nature under the artificially assumed mask of a most daring cynic" and later became the faithful

literary shield-bearer of Bettina [von Arnim], of the *Kind* [i.e., her *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde* (Goethe's correspondence with a child)].

Finally there was the Assessor Gustav Lipke, later attorney and member of the Reichstag, who was occasionally imprisoned because of his political speeches. He was a friend of Bruno Bauer until the latter's death.

When we proceed from the "inner circle" at Hippel's to the wider circle, it should first be emphasized that many from this latter group, at least at times, came just as often to Hippel's as the ones named in the former group and therefore would have earned just as exact a description. But their names were in the course of the years not so regularly and repeatedly named. They did not draw interest to themselves as much as the former did.

This wider circle was an almost incalculable crowd. It would be a useless effort, even to make the attempt to say when, how often, and how long individuals of this confused group frequented Hippel's. One came perhaps only a couple of times and then stayed away forever; another put years between his first and last visit; a third was as regular as any for a short time; and a fourth came just when he felt like it. And all this coming and going lasted about a decade!

Hence it is impossible to give more than a list of names. To make the overview easier to some extent, groups have been put together, either those who came from another such, as from "Rütli" to "The Free," or went from this to another such, as the "Free Trade Association." Also those who later united again elsewhere on the basis of interest in a special purpose, say for the founding of a journal. That, with the resulting kind of ordering of the many names, no classification of any kind is aimed at, hopefully does not need to be especially emphasized.

It is equally understandable that all of them can only be touched on here and our interest in them may be only secondary. For many others more detailed information can be found elsewhere. Even the

most fleeting visit with "The Free" left a certain impression on all of them, and only with a few was this completely wiped out in the course of years. Hardly a single one of them is still living. Some died in misery and loneliness, others "accomplished something" and attained "honor and dignity." But all were scattered over the earth and probably only a very few later still maintained any kind of relationship with one another.

The number of journalists who went in and out at Hippel's was quite extraordinarily large. In part they were made up of those who also met in the afternoon in the famous "red room" of Stehely's café, in part they had no outspokenly radical political view and came more from curiosity and a fleeting interest.

One of the most talented and probably the most energetic among them all was Gustav Julius, who was to die early in London. He was the founder of the "Berliner Zeitungshalle" [Berlin newspaper reading room] on the corner of Jaegerstrasse and Oberwallstrasse that was much visited in the years of the revolution and was very often named in the history of those days; he likewise founded the radical paper of the same name [*Zeitungshalle*]. Then came: Dr. Karl Nauwerck, the "political teacher of the young," a quiet and industrious, but inwardly temperate Privatdozent [lecturer] at the university, the author of the book *Über die Teilnahme am Staate* [On participation in the state] and collaborator of the *Deutsches Jahrbuch*, whose dismissal in 1844 caused a sensation and gave the students occasion for a great demonstration; Guido Weiss, an outstanding stylist and one of the best German journalists, the later founder of *Die Zukunft* and *Die Wage*; Adolph Streckfuss, who took a lively part in the revolution; Feodor Wehl, the editor of the *Berliner Wespen*; Max Cohnheim, a young journalist; Albert Fränkel, one of the oldest collaborators of *Die Gartenlaube*; Adolph Wolff, called the "black Wolff," also named Schönfliess, the author of *Berliner Revolutions-Chronik: Darstellung der Berliner Bewegung im Jahre 1848 nach politischen, sozialen und literarischen Beziehungen*; Ludwig Köppe from Dessau, the brother of the earlier Anhalt minister; Jungnitz, the collaborator of Bruno Bauer on his *Denkwürdigkeiten zur Geschichte der neueren Zeit*

[Notable events in recent history]; Julius Löwenberg, later collaborator of the *Vossische Zeitung*; and finally a G. Wachenhusen, the author of *An die deutschen Studenten* [To the German students].

Besides the journalists young poets were also often seen at Hippel's, bringing enthusiasm to the always stimulating circle. They were indeed all together drawn into the hot excitement of those days, and took a lively part in the questions that were important at that time, without fear of "bias." One saw there the young Rudolph Gottschall, who—expelled from Königsberg because of his C*ensurflüchtlinge* [Fugitives from the censor] and his *Ulrich von Hutten*—served his year with the defense guard in Berlin in 1844; somewhat earlier, in 1843, the twenty-four-year-old Wilhelm Jordan, already with a doctor's degree, who had just sung his first songs of the *Glocke und Kanone* [Bell and Cannon, 1841] and now here saw before him the figures of his later *Demiurgos* [1852]; Karl Beck, the inspired singer of *Nächte* [Nights], who was already able to publish his *Gesammelte Gedichte* [Collected poems] and was honored by all in Berlin; there was a younger poet Otto von Wenckstern, forgotten today, from Wuppertal, who had studied in Bonn; finally there was Reinhold Solger, also forgotten today, the very talented poet of the unfortunately uncompleted *Hans von Katzefingen*, who went with Kossuth to America, where he died.

Among the poets were J. L. Klein, the dramatist and publisher of the *Berliner Modenspiegel*, whose *Zenobia* had just appeared at that time; and finally another interesting figure, that of the Königsberger Albert Dulk, the author of the dramatic poem *Orla*, who later went over to the Social Democrats.

Many of the members of "The Free" belonged to other associations also, or formed such after they had found a common principle of interest through their acquaintance there.

Thus young and talented minds came over from their "Rütli"—a literary-scientific association, but which also gladly cultivated the "higher nonsense"—to "The Free," to make a welcome fleeting appearance or even to remain longer. There was Titus Ullrich, the young

poet of *Das hohe Lied*; the music critic and humorist Ernst Kossak; the historical painter Heinrich Ulke, who took on every new idea of freedom with youthful enthusiasm; and a Wilhelm Caspary, collaborator on *Der Freimütige*. The visits of these "Rütli" people occurred in the years 1844–46. [This "Rütli" is not to be confused with the later literary circle of the same name, which was founded in 1852 by Franz Kugler and Friedrich Eggers, and included the writers Theodor Fontane, Theodor Storm, and Paul Heyse.]

From this "Rütli" society came the later founders and collaborators of *Kladderadatsch*, all more or less frequent guests at Hippel's. First of all David Kalisch, the real father of *Kladderadatsch*, as well as of the "Berliner Posse" [a type of farce popular on the Berlin stage], who was welcome among "The Free" because of his wit, but who may also have learned much from their sharp criticism. Then the latter's cousins: Rudolf Löwenstein, the expert in mnemonics and a poet of charming children's songs, and Ernst Dohm, who came to Hippel's only in later years when he became head of *Kladderadatsch* in 1849, after its revival. Finally the paper's later illustrator, the artist Wilhelm Scholz, who came only a few times.

The wider group also contained those who later, to support their idea of free trade, formed a "Free Trade Association."

Among them was Julius Faucher, who really should have his place in the "inner circle," for he was a regular visitor at Hippel's for a long time and certainly not among the boring ones. He was born in Berlin in 1820 in one of the corner houses at the intersection of Friedrichstrasse and Unter den Linden. His father belonged to the French colony, the progeny of the former emigrants. Julius had more of a Frenchman about him than a German. Of a sharp intellect, a striking, but never raw wit, a bubbling liveliness, he was through and through a brilliant nature and everywhere welcome company. In 1845 he married the foster daughter Karoline of the hat maker Sommerbrodt and a year later went from Berlin to Stettin, and from there, after restless trips to agitate for better conditions, back to Berlin, where he founded the *Berliner Abendpost* after the revolution, one of the best edited, most radical, and most interesting daily papers that ever existed. Since

they attacked the "force state" from more than one side and with the sharpest weapons, the state made their lives impossible in its well-known way and Faucher went to London with Dr. Meyen, who also collaborated on the *Berliner Abendpost*.

Faucher was the soul of the Free Trade Association, which also included: the literary figure Dr. Bettziech, who was later, under the pseudonym H. Beta, an industrious collaborator on *Die Gartenlaube* —he was lame and deformed and poor as Job, but always cheerful; "fat" Stein; John Prince-Smith, the well known free trader; Walter Rogge, the brilliant stylist and later pastor; and Dr. Wiss, who must have frequented Hippel's for a long time in the most friendly way with the leaders of "The Free," later sought to found *Die Reform* with Ruge, and then went to America, where he became the editor of the *Amerikanische Turnzeitung* [American gymnastics journal], until he again returned to Europe.

Further there were those who later worked on the founding of the *National-Zeitung* and collaborated on it, and then in part also stayed away: first, Dr. Friedrich Zabel, at that time still a teacher in an upper school—he was its real founder and later director; Otto Michaelis, the free trader and later creator of the trade regulations; Otto Wolff, who then went to Stettin as editor; Theodor Mügge, who had just begun his fruitful career as a novelist with his *Toussaint*; and Adolf Rutenberg, already named in the inner circle.

Later collaborators of the journal were the brothers Adolph and Otto Gumprecht from Erfurt, the one a travel writer, the other a music critic.

Also the later socialists appeared and in the very beginning were even keen visitors of the circle, until their activity drove them from Berlin and before their personally spiteful criticism made their staying in the circle impossible. Right at the beginning of the 1840s the figure of Karl Marx appeared.

His friend Friedrich Engels appeared somewhat later, but only after Marx had already left Berlin. Then the lyricist Ernst Dronke, the author of the book *Berlin* and another of short stories *Aus dem Volke*

[From the people], who soon had to flee to England because of police harassment. Like Marx and Engels, he was an editor on the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* of 1848.

Of the individuals who appeared as occasional visitors to Hippel's in the course of the years, let the following also be named:

Hermann Raster, at that time a young student, later the well known editor of the *Illinois Staatszeitung* in Chicago; Alexander Kapp, likewise a young student of law; the "tall profligate" [Liederling] Hieronymus Thrun, by trade a music teacher, a dissolute genius; an architect Freiesleben from Desssau, one of the later "Latin farmers" in Texas [so-called because of their superior education]; the civil service trainee Eduard Flottwell, oldest son of the Province President, who later made his way through life as a photographer; Enno Sander, who took part in the uprising in Baden; W. von Neumann, his cousin; the esthete Max Schasler; the book dealers Twietmeyer and Wilhelm Cornelius, the former supporter of the idea of the Federation of the Rhine and prisoner of Graudenz; von Förster, a witty cynic; Mayor Zehrmann, later in Potsdam; Max Schmidt, a young painter from Weimar; a Freiherr von Gaudy; Alcibiades Faucher, brother of Jules, who was intellectually more than slow and every evening drank himself into a stupor.

And to name a few more names, just as they occur, without any further clues: a von Leitner from Austria; a jurist Nernst; Carl Noback; and Dr. Julius Waldeck, a clever doctor and cousin of Johann Jacoby.

At the time of the revolution many new faces briefly entered the circle of "The Free." To someone knowledgeable of the history of those days many would have a familiar ring, but their appearances vanished again as quickly as they came and we have already named too many names.

But, one asks, there were also women at Hippel's, were there not? Yes indeed, and we see them sitting without inhibition and affectedness at the loud table, which demanded from them the same manliness as from every other visitor, when it was a matter of treating

questions without sentimentality and prudery, just as day and chance offered them.

Unfortunately apart from the one, who will occupy us so much, we know only a few. There was the wife of Dr. Wiss, a democrat from head to toe; a married actress with a good reputation, whose name could not be found; and Karoline Sommerbrodt, the wife of Faucher, who was carefully raised by a rich aunt and was accustomed to the best social forms and only with reluctance tolerated the fact that the gatherings were at times transferred to her salon in Dessauer-strasse, but still always was able to grin and bear it. Several men also brought their sweethearts with them; Buhl, for example, brought his, who had the nickname Mirabeau and boasted that she had thrown the whole "moral junk" out the window. Finally there was Louise Aston. She was one of the most conspicuous figures of that time. Married early and soon divorced from her husband, an Englishman, she was temperamental and passionate; before she came to Berlin a certain reputation had already preceded her. Her charming appearance, her elegant toilette, which she occasionally changed for men's clothing, her whole free and yet not loud behavior held the attention of many here too. She was expelled in 1846 because of her association with the radical elements, lived for a time near Berlin and only later returned there. Incidentally she seldom appeared among "The Free." Her writings are without any special significance and reveal little of the originality of her personality, which may indeed have consisted more in external things.

Guests also often appeared at the round table who were traveling through and, attracted by the reputation of "The Free," wanted to convince themselves with their own eyes of the truth of the rumors and to come into personal contact with the bearers of the so often mentioned names.

Witnesses have remained for three such brief guest visits of well known personalities, but unfortunately it must be immediately added that not one of these three greats stayed for even the length of an evening, but disappeared after a short stay.

The first was Arnold Ruge. He appeared one evening at the beginning of November 1842 with his brother Ludwig and the publisher Otto Wigand from Leipzig at Walburg's wine tavern in Poststrasse. He wanted to see the people face to face with whom he had already been so long in lively contact as publisher of the *Hallisches Jahrbuch*. He met the whole company together. Ludwig Ruge relates: "At first it was rather quiet and he was the center of the conversation. Little by little several freed themselves from the petit bourgeois conversation"—Ruge had discussed with Bauer, Nauwerck, and Köppen the plan of a "free university," under the circumstances of the time something impossible, and for the younger men, who had listened quietly at first, the matter became boring and they were opposed—"and they lapsed into their old usual tone. The free mood increased to the incredible. I saw how Arnold sat there, mute and like stone. A storm had to break out, for it was boiling and seething inside him. All at once he sprang up and called with a loud voice: 'You want to be free and don't notice that you're stuck up to your ears in stinking mud! With filthy things you can free neither men nor peoples! Clean yourselves up first before you set about such a great task!'"

With that the vain man, whose much overrated intellectual significance never matched his influence in that time, left the company never to return. One can imagine that the outbreak of moral indignation of this preacher in the wilderness aroused only the greatest amusement in those left behind, and one can understand the bitterness with which the one hurt in his most sacred feelings later went after "The Free." If this trivial event did not also progress to "general city gossip," it nevertheless contributed to bringing "The Free" into disrepute by outsiders, all the more since they themselves naturally did not

think of answering it. Arnold Ruge, however, formed the view in all seriousness that he "had more or less blown up the company."

A second visitor behaved less stupidly than Ruge, to be sure, in that he simply silently departed, when it no longer pleased him, but he was not happier. He was Georg Herwegh, the poet of the *Gedichte eines Lebendigen* [Poems of a living man], who in his triumphal trip through Germany had also come to Berlin in November 1842, where, as is well known, he was received by the king, although his poems had been forbidden shortly before in Prussia. He stayed with "The Free" only a short while, spoke on request some of his verses with his usual verve and left again. In his judgment of the company—he spoke of their "smutty jokes"—he was obviously strongly influenced by Ruge, who said that Herwegh had even made verses against their mischief. At any rate the young and celebrated poet, who was already so pampered at that time, felt hardly comfortable among those frank, informal critics.

It was later asserted publicly that "The Free" wanted to make Herwegh's visit the occasion for a great demonstration, and it was vehemently argued whether the poet had ever really been among them at all. Herwegh himself, in an unpublished letter to the *Rheinische Zeitung*, denied his visit altogether, and that we must believe. It is sufficient that the existence of "The Free" was once again established. As Bruno Bauer said later, they were exactly the ghost that haunted the year 1842, and he rightly thought that Herwegh should have studied them better before passing such judgment on them.

For a part of one evening a third guest was a much less important poet: Hoffmann von Fallersleben. The professor, who was dismissed in Breslau, went through the German districts as a complaining bard and also came to Berlin. It was again the "wine tavern in Poststrasse" and not Hippel's that received the honor of his visit. Hoffmann asserted that he found the two Bauers "in a not responsible condition"

and that their "raw and common remarks made him feel so uncomfortable" that he walked out. If this accusation sounds somewhat remarkable, coming from his mouth, then doubtless other circumstances were at work here to cause the singer of higher ballads to leave.

But "The Free" let all criticism pass over them in silence and at most laughed at it.

The visits of such guests as these three did bring about the spreading of the reputation of "The Free" to the public, but in a thoroughly unflattering way, and in the press—but, recall what kind of press that was!—hardly a good word about the "Hippel gang" was ever printed.

How much of this can be attributed to sensation, we shall still see. In the meantime, we ask: How were the ways and doings of a private society the business of the public anyway?

This is how it happened. A correspondent of the *Königsberger Zeitung*, who had nothing better to write, reported in a long article at the beginning of June 1842 on the origin of an association "whose goal was supposed to be the renewing of the well known Holstein 'Philalethes' [truth lovers] from the end of the previous century" and it would bear the name "The Free." What further drivel the correspondent in question reported is approximately the following: Like those older Philalethes, the "Association of the Free" rejects the Bible and also wishes to set in place of tradition no other definite creed but exclusively to raise on their shield the autonomy of the spirit. In general the new association follows the old one in all points, only not in its relation to the state's power; rather, the new association is determined right from the beginning to come to the fore resolutely, to announce openly the withdrawal of its members from the church, so as not to come under suspicion of hypocrisy through a purely passive attitude; etc.

It goes without saying that this nonsense either arose in the brain of the wage-hungry reporter himself, or was suggested to him by a joker from the Hippelites and then was taken by the ignorant man at face value.

Then news reached Königsberg that no one in Berlin knew anything about the "new association."

But the *Frankfurter Journal* let itself be duped also and even more thoroughly. It even carried in an article on 7 June the alleged "creed" of "The Free." This document was so crazy, when one knows the true views of this so radical society, that one is inclined to assume some kind of gross mistake or imputation. For if it was a joker that prompted what was said in the Königsberg paper, then the Frankfurter paper let the rag of some kind of religious sect be stuck in its hand. Thus this creed says, to quote only one sentence: "We believe in one, almighty, all-knowing God, the creator of heaven and earth, the father of all being" and at the end: "We celebrate with childish gratitude festivals for the honor of the one God. . . . May He be gracious to our souls now and forever."

The public never seriously believed in the existence of the society and remained unclear about its goals and purposes.

What came out later was reduced to short notices, which incidentally were entirely calculated to give the Philistines a shudder at the wild doings of these depraved people, and let it appear in reality just as their fantasy presented in their dreams the "deniers of everything sacred to God and man."

"The Free" as such never played a role. When in the years of revolution some from the circle took part in the movement, they did it on their own. To the public the circle had vanished from sight so much that their names were not once brought into connection with those events.

It would be altogether forgotten today, if the memory of a few individuals who belonged to it had not called it to mind and kept alive the memory of their meeting places.

Well, how were things at Hippel's?

Was the tone of the circle truly as unheard-of as was reported, or did the rumors rely for the greatest part on more or less malicious exaggerations, as well as on prejudicial judgment?

Certainly the latter was the case.

Above all the tone was very diverse, according to the number and kind of those who were gathered.

It could be that when one came to Hippel's, one found Bruno Bauer with someone of those present absorbed in a keen game of cards, which could last for hours. They played "Kreuz- oder Eichel-Mariage" ["Cross or acorn marriage" appears to refer to having the king and queen of the same suit—the "acorn" suit is no longer in common use]; hardly a word was spoken, and thick clouds of smoke rose from their pipes; only now and then a remark could be heard. Then the small, rugged man left again and the others, who had amused themselves in their fashion just as quietly, likewise left. The astonished observers of such an evening then asked: Do people with "foreheads on which intellect is evident" occupy themselves like that? They are just pure Philistines!

But one could also find it otherwise, especially when many of the younger people were present. Then the whole long table was occupied from one end to the other and the evening fled by in intense, loud discussions: a remark was dropped that did not please someone and he took it up, another answered, and soon the liveliest discussion ensued. No one spoke for long and each sought to be brief. At most they listened to Bruno Bauer sometimes longer, when he spoke in his sharp, somewhat superior way. But each also said what he thought, and nothing was discreet or molded into a refined form. What one said only had to make sense.

That the sharpest criticism was exercised on everything was self-evident. Much was dismissed with the word "Dreck" [rubbish] and often an even stronger word was chosen for this. If then such a conversation had continued down to the end of the table, had seized the whole company, and had become ever more lively and loud, then

probably a stranger who had come to Hippel's by chance, who listened from a nearby table, would become somewhat nervous from all the slogans of the Hegelian school, not one of which he understood, and ask himself with a shudder, what he was really witnessing.

It is also true that many evenings were spent in a forced cheerfulness; that there was no longer a question of a serious conversation; that each tried to top the other in telling dirty, cynical jokes. It probably also happened on such occasions that Edgar Bauer rolled on the floor like a real street urchin, or Ludwig Buhl went too far over the limits of good taste for his behavior to be excusable.

But these evenings never ended regularly. Most proceeded rather in the most stimulating and uninhibited way.

The entrance to the wine tavern in Friedrichstrasse 94 was on the ground flour. After one had stepped into the archway and turned to the right, he found himself in a spacious, undecorated room with a long table in the middle, and took whatever place happened to be free. If he desired, he could take part in the conversation, naturally without "introducing" himself to his neighbor—it could often last a long time until one learned by chance who he was. If he had no desire to speak, he kept silent. Soon Hippel came up. He was usually taciturn, but always stood attentively in his corner and inwardly took part in the doings of his guests. He brought what was desired.

Subjects for conversation were indeed not lacking in those exciting years: There was the censorship, which offered inexhaustible occasions for constantly new examinations of the prevailing power; the twenty-sheet question [according to the Karlsbad Conference of 1819, manuscripts of more than twenty sheets did not need prior censorship]; the increasingly spreading movement of socialism and its course through the various lands; the incipient hatred of Jews; the religious and the student movements; their own, unceasing battle with the authorities—to name only some of the themes among a hundred others.

Generally no one drank too much. Cases of drunkenness might happen, but they were the exceptions. Incidentally, many a stranger may have mistaken the passionate liveliness of someone for drunkenness.

On the other hand, some individuals of "The Free" were big on leg-pulling and teasing. Whether these were directed at a stranger, who had fallen into the company by chance and showed himself as a useful victim, or at the public by, for example, smuggling into a declaration in favor of the "Friends of Light" [a group that preached a simple, evangelical Christianity] the names of the most-named "Free," among many others. They were always ready to hold stupidity and simplicity for fools, just as they also treated one another not exactly tenderly.

Hippel also enjoyed the favor of "The Free" to such a special degree because he—lent money. But when his patience came to an end and he refused to give further credit, then "The Free" became angry and moved to Unter den Linden, where a war council was held, which led to a surprising result. They decided to beg along Unter den Linden. It was Enno Sander, in whose head this ingenious idea popped up and who was also the first to carry it out. As soon as he noticed an individual who appeared serviceable, he walked up to him, took off his hat, and requested humbly: "I would like to ask for a little something, even if it's only just a taler. Hippel is no longer giving credit and we would very much like to drink another punchbowl." On the first evening they were said to have had particular luck: one of the very first was a stranger who laughed at the joke and took the whole company back to Hippel's, where they drank until dawn, and more than a punchbowl. Another evening—for this joke was repeated in all seriousness—they separated, made an appointment for a certain street corner and met again in half an hour, to put their booty together and in the Kapkeller or elsewhere exchange it for drinks and pleasure. Even if they did not always find a "gentleman stranger," once they got ten talers and always got something.

In summer joint excursions were made to the "Spandauer Bock," often in a great number, or also to Treptow and other points in the surroundings.

On very special occasions, they went to Köthen. There, patterned after "The Free," the "Kellergesellschaft" [(wine) cellar society] had been organized, in which, it was said, evenings passed at times that were even wilder than the loudest at Hippel's. When "The Free" came over, then the jollity reached its highest point, and the world was, as far as it could be, "turned on its head," until they had celebrated several days and nights and returned again to Berlin.

That's the way things were with "The Free."

We will only be able to understand their doings, if we do not forget one thing: all these men lived in the certain hope of soon entering into a life of freedom. But since what was so desired still did not open up, they behaved like adolescents: impatient, moody, and full of contradictions. But this apparent failing was at the same time the advantage of youthful people, and it precisely marked in turn the greatest attraction of their society, that in each one of them every mood of the moment was allowed to find its expression. Even if they were still not yet "free," they were at least all inwardly endeavoring to appear as such.

In this continual struggle for freedom lay also the meaning of the circle. At no time was criticism, the mother of all progress, so respected as among its members; never had it been more relentless and never before had it ventured so far forward. It laid its ax on concepts that had until then stood firm and unshakeable. Its sincerity was as great as its intrepidity. It was still far from its final goal: what it gained was little more than what it gave up.

But there was one among them who was to lead them beyond themselves to that goal.

We have seen how the "bad reputation" of "The Free" came about: through the guests who were not allowed to play the role they hoped to play in the company, which spared nothing, and therefore "felt rejected" by it; and through those who had no sense at all for this independent, bold, loud, and often unrestrained life and saw only its superficialities.

So much has been reported anecdotally about the round table, so few words of correct appreciation have been found for it. And yet, so many sat there, probably about a hundred, and each passed—even if often only a few—hours of stimulation in it, heard free and therefore good words, and left not poorer than when he came, unless it was in "ideals"!

It was solely through its inherent attraction that this remarkable circle lasted almost an entire eventful decade, by itself already a proof of its significance.

Thus it was a good school of sharp reasoning and intrepid thinking in a time when everything old seemed to be collapsing, so as to make a place for the new. And as the old rose again in another form, the quiet and invisible achievements of those days continued to work and renewed themselves in ours.

Therefore it is not too much if we say: Hardly ever in the history of a people—unless it was at the time of the French Encyclopedists—has a circle of men met as significant, as unique, as interesting, as radical, and as unconcerned about every judgment as "The Free" at Hippel's formed in the fifth decade of the nineteenth century in Berlin.

It was a circle, perhaps not worth, but also not unworthy of a man who was one of its most faithful members, a man through whom it has gained a significance and an interest for posterity, which will carry the name of "The Free" with his own into the memory of the future.

Chapter Four

Max Stirner

Max Stirner

1840–1845

The name Stirner – External appearance – Nature and character – Stirner among "The Free" – First publications – Newspaper correspondent – Literary works – Second marriage – Story of the wedding – Marie Dähnhardt – The summit years

In this circle of "The Free" the figure of Max Stirner appeared for a full decade.

Max Stirner—thus Johann Caspar Schmidt was named already as a student by his fellow students because of his strikingly high forehead [Stirn, in German]; he signed his first published works that way; he was exclusively addressed thus in the circle of his acquaintances; and that is what he called himself. Finally he put this name on his book which was to make it immortal for all time.

Let him be named Stirner here, too, from now on.

Who now was Max Stirner? How did he look? What was his nature? And what was his character?

In a word: What kind of a *man* [Mensch] was he? That is the question that up to now had to be left so completely out of consideration, since no witnesses could be found to answer it. But now, when the person concerned enters into the "circle of the living," the question deserves detailed attention before anything else.

Outwardly of middle height, Max Stirner was a slim, almost lean man, inconspicuous in every way. Simply dressed, but always with great care and cleanliness, his compact appearance was thoroughly that of a man without any outward pretension. If here and there he was declared to be a dandy, then it may be recalled that many already held every orderly, however simply dressed man to be a fop, which Stirner quite certainly was not. Rather, he had something of the upper school teacher about him, "a teacher of the best kind for upper school girls," and this impression was further strengthened by his silvery glasses. As a teacher at Mme. Gropius's he is said to have worn "thin steel glasses with small lenses" that, when he took them off—something he often did—showed the strong indentation they made over his nose.

He never appeared neglected, even if in later years, when need and loneliness beset him, he may not have given his outward appearance its old exactness.

He wore short blond sideburns and mustache, while his chin was always clean-shaven, and his blond, reddish, lightly curled and short-cut, soft hair left completely free his massive, domed, quite strikingly high and conspicuous forehead.

Behind the glasses his clear, blue eyes looked at people and things calmly and gently, neither dreamily nor staring. Around the fine, small-lipped mouth often played a friendly smile, which with the years sharpened and which betrayed an inner irony, just as many noticed in Stirner a "quiet inclination to ridicule." This trait, attributed by others to bitterness, had certainly not yet gripped him in the years in which he appears to us here, nor had ever been used to wound anyone.

His nose was moderately large, strong, ending in a point; his chin was bold. Stirner's hands were especially handsome: white, well cared for, slim, "aristocratic" hands.

In short he gave a thoroughly pleasant impression. He appeared self-confident and calm, without hasty and jerky movements—with a light trace of pedantry.

As unfortunate as it is, there is no picture of him that would strengthen or deepen this description.

His outward appearance thoroughly corresponded with Stirner's nature and character, whose basic trait was that of an unshakeable calmness and composure.

He was polite toward all with whom he associated; he was never torn by anger or ever overcome by it. He was helpful where he could be—one of the two letters in his own hand that remain gives proof of

his readiness to help. He was unobtrusive in every way, in word and in deed, was without presumption or vanity, and enjoyed universal respect and liking. It is said that never, but never did it happen that he accused anyone or admonished him, or said something unfavorable "behind his neighbor's back"—a proof of inner refinement, such as certainly only a few people may claim for themselves.

Thus Stirner had not a single personal enemy. Since he himself through his person and his life did not invite judgment and he did not get close to anyone, no one judged him.

But just as he had no enemies, so too he possessed not a single intimate friend. Thoroughly tasteful as he was, the brotherly hugs as well as the sentimental outpourings of youthful friendship must have been a horror to him, and in later years he obviously needed no close friend for what he could trust himself to cope with. He said the best and deepest things with amazing openness. He did not direct his words to those around or close to him, who were unable to understand him, but rather beyond them to those whom he did not know and whom he perhaps saw as his best friends. Who indeed could have offered him intellectual friendship, whom he would not have left behind him in his long course? He was in almost daily association with the most progressive people of his time; as far as they may already have gone, they all lagged behind him, stuck in their criticism of what he had already destroyed. Apart from his association with them, however, nothing is reported of any other acquaintances of Stirner. Since all his other personal relationships cannot be traced and no clues of any kind have turned up, it may rightly be assumed that he had formed no other acquaintances at all, that he, like his thoughts, went through life alone.

This characteristic reserve also extends to his private life. One knew nothing of him: of his life, his income, his inclinations, his joys and sorrows. He hid them, never spoke of them, never expressed them. There must have been in his nature a silent, cold trait that did

not allow impertinent and curious questions. Besides, every one of the Hippelites was very much occupied with himself!

Certainly Stirner loved and truly respected only a few people in his life, and surely he had a right to do this. The masses must have been indifferent to him as well as their behavior. He must often have had the feeling that he once mentioned: of finding himself in a madhouse surrounded by fools. He chose the only means offered him: he went as far as possible out of the way of the fools. He did not concern himself about them. That is the reason for his friendly and cold manner, which indeed in a lively exchange of thoughts often gave way to an obvious interest in the subject of conversation, and still at the same time never permitted too much familiarity.

Stirner must have had an extremely sensitive and unusually delicate nature. A rare personal remark he once made to a friend is characteristic: He related to that friend that his first wife had once uncovered herself unconsciously in sleep, and that it had been impossible for him from that moment on to touch her again. How he could have endured the loud, often raw circle at Hippel's for so long is a riddle we must try to resolve later.

His indifference to so many small things that excite other men was often interpreted as weakness, his passivity as lack of energy and strength to resist. That he was too unsuited to come out the victor in the noisy and stressful struggle for existence, that he often let things go, just as they were, and took refuge from their coarse demands in his inner calmness—is beyond question; he just followed his nature. But that he would have been happier if he had fought "against himself," that is an assumption that, in the case of a man who, like no other, penetrated into the basis of what drives human beings, thoroughly requires a proof. Stirner never dropped the reins of his life

from his hands; but he often held them slack and mostly just let the days go by.

People held this outwardly so dispassionate man to be incapable of passion and only a few passages in his work suggest otherwise. Perhaps he was without passion. At any rate he was without any brutality.

Just as he was without passion, so too he was said to be without ambition and without a feeling for honor. Now, since the views of people about honor were not his, so too their feelings could not be his; and if his sense of honor also never craved for small goals, still it was once satisfied in an exhaustive way such as is granted to only a few. The successes of the day meant nothing to him, and the one, great one of posterity was certainly his. This he must have known.

Moderate in eating and drinking, he lived in apparent contentment in the simplicity, in which he was reared, and the only luxury that he allowed himself was good cigars. For he smoked a lot, almost all day. As he "set his affair on nothing," so he never attached his heart completely on anything that would have been able to destroy his life or even make it unbearable: neither on a human being nor on the small things of daily life. And if he never directly made anyone happy, then by a still wider margin he never made anyone unhappy through his own fault. In earlier times such a person was called a wise man.

A human being like only a few, made to be a free man among the free, and damned to be a link in the chain of masters and slaves! And yet a man, proud and sure like few others, stripping this chain of people from him, and going among them without contempt and hate, but also without pity and love, and thus fulfilling the necessities of life that he recognized as such.

Thus Stirner stands there, without inner and outer contradictions, simple, plain and great, and nothing is disturbing in his appearance except its rarity. Everything lives in the man that lives in his work: the unshakeable knowledge of that which life holds—the knowledge of self-preservation!

He does not ask for noisy love or loud admiration. Whoever loves freedom, will also have to love this man, who, following its laws and thus asserting himself, stands before us as likeable as he appears to us among the "others."

When Stirner entered the circle of "The Free," cannot be said with certainty. It may have been in the middle or end of 1841, because he did not know Karl Marx, who had left Berlin at the beginning of this year.

At any rate he was already at the regular gatherings at Walburg's in Poststrasse, the "Alte Post," and then remained for years one of the most regular visitors of Hippel's round table.

He definitely belonged to the narrower circle. He was good friends and well known to the Bauers, especially Bruno, and to Buhl, Meyen, Engels, Rutenberg, Mussak, and others. With most of them he used the familiar address "Du."

He had a special relationship with C. F. Köppen and Hermann Maron, as well as with Dr. Arthur Müller. Stirner, as was already expressed, was really intimate with none of them.

The way he first came into contact with the circle cannot be said with certainty. Did it happen through Bruno Bauer himself, whom he may have met already as a student? Bauer too had sat at the feet of Hegel in 1827. Did his first works bring about a closer acquaintance? Or was it rather through the intellectuals themselves that he was first led to take up his pen in collaboration on the same journals?

At any rate it remained the only circle that he ever joined; in it he found the company that he needed, and many had the impression that he felt himself drawn to it more from this sociability than because of an inner intellectual community. This last assumption gains in probability if we remember how sensitive he was even in regard to appearances. As we have seen, this circle was suited like no other to bring informally before him all those personalities in whom he must have taken the greatest interest because of their views.

As loud and noisy as it usually was at Hippel's, just as quietly did Stirner keep a low profile. Very seldom did he take part in passionate discussions, and he never became cynical, trying to outdo others who were speaking. One never heard from him a vehement, raw, or even vulgar word, such as were no rarity at Hippel's. Calm, smiling, "comfortable" as a "hedonist," he sat there in the turbulent circle, threw in now and then a pertinent remark or a witticism, which showed how exactly, in spite of everything, he was listening to the general conversation, and watched the smoke from his cigar.

At the same time he was definitely not really taciturn. On the contrary, he conversed gladly with whoever happened to be his neighbor. The latter often had the opportunity to admire the extensive sure knowledge, with which Stirner dominated the very diverse fields that the conversation touched upon—he was considered a scholar of the first rank by his closer acquaintances. One person said that he was supposed to have philosophized unwillingly; when he did, it was certainly about Feuerbach, said another.

Stirner almost never spoke about himself, and he was far from any kind of gossip. Most people, who had no concept at all of his real significance, held the "contented," simple, painfully modest man to be a harmless man of little importance, without suspecting what lay within him, and they ignored him until later, when he drew the attention of everyone in such a high degree onto himself.

His name is not mentioned in the wild pranks of "The Free," yet he would have watched them with the same quiet contentment, like all their doings, since he was anything but a killjoy. On the other hand, he took part in the summer excursions, to Spandauer Bock, to Treptow, to wherever they went.

Otherwise he was by no means unsociable and he did not spurn drinking a cup of self-made coffee with one or another of his youthful admirers in their student rooms, eating doughnuts with it, as we also see him do on New Year's Eve of 1847 when he accepted an invitation from the Hungarian translator and writer Kertbeny, which led to a "rather long dissipation" in the latter's room [see note on page 122]; and thus he may have accepted many another invitation with the politeness that he showed to all his visitors. He was an unobtrusive, never disturbing, welcome guest, who was affable-cheerful and gladly laughed over a good joke, without himself ever being the center of attention or even wishing to be.

Until 1846, incidentally, Stirner was also a regular coffee guest in the famous "red room" of Stehely's confectionery on Gendarmenmarkt, where all the restless, excited, bright minds of Berlin used to meet at that time, above all among the newspaper correspondents, and where he met many whom he would see again on that same evening at Hippel's. He would often have also visited the Bernstein reading room in Behrenstrasse in earlier years.

Again and again we meet him at Hippel's. Here lay the threads that connected him to the outside world: everyone who saw him there still remembered him in later years; there he found the people that he "used," without doing them any harm.

That is the way Max Stirner was toward the outside world at the time when his inner thoughts restlessly moved him, with which he struggled until he vanquished them—at first only in preliminary studies. Even later he remained the same person.

A bit later than his entry into the circle of "The Free," in January 1842, came the first two publications of Stirner that we know of: the essay on Bruno Bauer's *Posaune* and the *Gegenwort*.

The first, a review of the just published—by Wigand in Leipzig toward the end of 1841—anonymous book of Bruno Bauer *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen. Ein Ultimatum* [The trumpet of the Last Judgment against Hegel the atheist and Antichrist. An ultimatum], appeared in the *Telegraph für Deutschland*, which was published by Karl Gutzkow with Campe in Hamburg, in Nos. 6–8 of January 1842 and is signed with "Stirner"—the first time that this name appears in print. It must therefore have been written shortly before, probably at the end of December.

The article "Über B. Bauers Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts" begins with a protest against the rotten "peacetime of diplomacy," then expresses the hope that an end is being prepared for it through the anonymous work, whose author is not hard to trace, if one knows the scientific standpoint of his works. The "priceless mystification," which wraps itself in the robe of a parson, is directed against the despicable gang of young Hegelians and in doing so finds their whole revolutionary malice in Hegel himself, whom it now reveals to the astonished world as a philosophical Jacobian.

Hegel, the almighty Hegel, on storming Heaven did push God off his throne, but the flock of angels, scattered to the winds, collected themselves together and blew the trumpet of the Last Judgment against him—the atheist and Antichrist! But now there is also no more peace: the reputation of the Germans in world history for radicalism fulfills itself.

Thus Stirner led to the book, whose contents meanwhile, "are to come before the eyes of the reader frittered away by no review." He therefore only briefly touched on it and reserved any addition until after the publication of the announced second part. The fulfillment of this promise never came in this form: Instead of blowing further into the trumpet, Bauer had enough to do with his dismissal and the founding and direction of his wide-ranging *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung*,

and Stirner soon went beyond him with those works that must have then quickly grown to the plan of his lifework.

Why, he asked at the end, take this book so confidently for a masquerade of its author (for whom in his later works he characteristically and not without a quiet malice wished a better memory with respect to Hegel)?—and he himself gave the answer: "Because a God-fearing man can never be as free and intelligent as the author is."

The second of these first two publications of Stirner was anonymous: the answer to a writing of Berlin preachers that came out of the struggle about the Sunday holiday, which moved the sentiments at that time. It was distributed to Berlin's churchgoers on New Year's Day, found little approval, and fell under the ridicule of the Berliners, who are always given to mockery. Stirner's answer was entitled *Gegenwort eines Mitgliedes der Berliner Gemeinde wider die Schrift der siebenundfünfzig Berliner Geistlichen: Die christliche Sonntagsfeier, ein Wort der Liebe an unsere Gemeinen* [Opposing word of a member of the Berlin community against the writing of fifty-seven Berlin clergymen: Celebrating the Christian Sunday, a word of love to our communities] and appeared, nicely printed, as a brochure of 22 pages at the price of 4 Ngr. [Neugroschen] in the publishing house of Robert Binder in Leipzig.

Stirner's authorship of it is proven.

The 57 authors of the "Word of love," who must indeed know it best, thinks Stirner, complain about the "decline of the church." They only remind us that we are much further along than we know. But are we worse, because we are no longer religious? What we are missing is enthusiasm, but the church no longer enthuses us. The believers act more rationally than they believe. Addressing himself to them, he shakes them up: You only fear, he says, to claim your right. You let yourselves be treated as immature children, while you "should have looked after the ineradicable right of men!" Let yourselves be taught the value of the human being by your teachers, your preachers, and as soon as the freedom to teach is pronounced they will have enough listeners. For you are men before you are Christians, and that's what you remain, even if you become such. I will be convinced, not forced

to believe. In the meantime, however, from slaves you have only become children; you are still not free and responsible men. What do you still need with a god who is not your own self? What do you still need with a lord? Indeed you no longer believe in him. Confess it freely and demand also for your teachers the inalienable freedom to teach. The "Word of Love" is then viewed more closely. The quibbling of the "servants of the divine word," which really should be absolutely firm, has long since become offensive. To listen to a free man, yes, a "sinner," is more uplifting than these righteous men. We are serious and conscientious people too, but we by no means believe that the fear of God is the highest and most sacred thing. Egotism may increase without it, and deep respect for "the authorities appointed by God" and obedience may die. Clergymen are even allowed to express this openly, whereas we, who "would like to say what is in our hearts," have only the command to keep silent! When we are accused of being godforsaken and the Jews are set before us as examples, then we answer: Just offer us a free word and you will see how your churches will fill up again. We avoid them as long as no free minds speak there. We, who do not fear God, do not stand in the wrong but in the right. On the battlefield the true enemy of the truly pious appears: the Christ of the Second Coming. So look forwards, not backwards, and if you hold the British out to us, who are free in spite of the tyranny of their church, then give us their freedom. The time of piety has passed, and the present demands the purely human, which alone is "the truly divine." It is up to you, whether further pious dependency or moral and courageous freedom shall prevail. And while he again turns to the clergymen themselves, the writer calls out: Once again therefore—fight for it yourselves, you preachers of the divine word, the freedom of speech, the freedom of teaching, and we will celebrate the achievement with you. For not merely to lay people, but also to you have I spoken. "Allow us to look one another in the eye as free human beings, wherever and however we meet again!"

The *Gegenwort* appeared toward the end of January, reached Berlin on 1 February, and was already banned on the 9th. Thus it

must have been written immediately after the appearance of the publication against which it was directed—in the first and second weeks of January.

A lively exchange of notes about its contents developed between the Prussian and the Saxon governments. Minister Rochow wrote to the Saxon government representative that he did not understand how this publication, whose seductive language and inexpensive price was suited to gain many customers, could have passed the Saxon border.

The latter, Flakenstein, answered that the writing has been able to obtain the imprimatur only in his absence, something he regretted. He then shifted the blame to the censor. Already on 17 January it was presented to the censor's staff "in a much more malicious tone, destroying everything existing," whose instructions he did not follow, in that he then still allowed the printing of the writing when it was presented in an edited version.

The notorious Minister Eichhorn of sad memory then interfered and wrote to Rochow in February not entirely clearly: The brochure brings to light the religion of the idolization of man—which has been rejected even in France—so openly and nakedly that, considering its effect, it could rather be taken as an apology for the writing against which it is directed than a refutation of it. Its effectiveness therefore will, at least in general, not correspond to the intention of the author, who obviously belongs to the most extreme outgrowth of the Young Hegelian school. Rather one will recognize in it the necessity of more serious rules even there where the most decisively rational view of Christianity prevails. Under these circumstances therefore the possible poor successes of the strict ban imposed in the interest of the good cause are only to be very much regretted.

Nothing is said of the author in this exchange.

As we see, Stirner must have again revised his work within a few days and in all haste, in order to gain the permission to print—admittedly very much against the intention and will of the Saxon senior censors.

The *Gegenwort* in turn found a refutation in the writing of a Lutheran cleric of obviously very moderate views, for the latter candidly appreciated its "joy in life and wholeheartedness," even if he faulted its "lack of restraint." Ludwig Buhl too was prompted to write an anonymous *Die Not der Kirche* [The need of the Church], in which he apparently also polemicized against Stirner and which shared the fate of the *Gegenwort* of being banned in Prussia immediately.

These first two publications, the review of the *Posaune* and the *Gegenwort*, were written almost at the same time and also belong close together internally. If in them Stirner still did not appear quite finished with the last of the concepts to be resolved, such as "man," and avoided extreme firmness of expression, it should not be overlooked that it is still a matter here of disguises and mystification, which had to be selected so as to be able to express himself at all and at the same time be as effective as he was. There shone through even here, already in its complete clarity, the final realization which Stirner was so very soon to attain. The invitation, "not to seek salvation outside of and above oneself, but rather to be one's own salvation and savior," showed it as did the always newly varied warning to the believers: "Come to yourselves!" and "Be yourselves!" At any rate, he soon did away with the last remnants, and already in the summer of that same year he stood on the firm ground on which he was to construct his work—his I and its uniqueness—so that Friedrich Engels, Marx's collaborator and friend, in a forgotten heroic epic "Triumph des Glaubens" [Triumph of faith], could put these words in the mouth of the "barrier-hater," as he characterized Stirner: "A bas les rois?—A bas aussi les lois!" [Down with kings? Down with laws too!]

The church and its religions were for Stirner once and for all dismissed with these first two attacks. From then on he would have another opponent and another way of attacking. And a wider field of effectiveness opened up for him: the daily newspaper.

Shortly after his first publications Stirner began a comprehensive and extensive activity as newspaper correspondent on two of the largest oppositional newspapers of the pre-March [pre-revolutionary] period, which in the movement of that time played the largest and most important role, an activity that ended only with the end of the year 1842.

One was the *Rheinische Zeitung für Politik, Handel und Gewerbe*, which was founded in Cologne on 1 January 1842 as the continuation of the *Rheinische Allgemeine*. It was the outspoken and sharply observant camp of the radicalism of those days, from which the incessant ventures against the plans of the reaction were carried out, until they were no longer able to withstand the persecution. The *Rheinische Zeitung*, after one and a quarter years existence, folded on 31 March 1843, after its director Dr. Karl Marx had already shortly before withdrawn from the editorial staff "because of the current relationship with the censor." It was to be resurrected only in the revolutionary year as the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* and was once again suppressed. It became, as Freiligrath sang in his famous farewell poem, a "proud rebel corpse!"

Stirner's corresponding articles to it began on 7 March in No. 66 and lasted until No. 286 of 13 October. There are 27 in all. Four of them are signed with "Stirner," the others (with the exception of the first on the "secret police" and other things, which also came from him) all carried the sign [a stylized "mp" which cannot be reproduced here] at their head, formed by a combination of the letters M and S, yet can also be taken from paleography, where it then means *manu propria* [by his own hand]. The sign was also used for several other contributions that in part could not have come from Berlin and in no case came from Stirner.

Most of Stirner's articles were short and touched on questions of the day, which are not always of interest to us. They were concise, at times sharp remarks of light irony: on the taxation of the newspaper debits, on the Sunday question, on press permission—"a word that is perhaps best suited to designate our current freedom of the press"—as

well as the Jewish question, on participle constructions, and on the just published caricature of the "German Michel," which must have delighted Stirner. In addition, publications that treated conditions of the time, mostly brochures of small size, were cause for discussion, whereby Stirner constantly let the authors have the word very extensively. Two of them were from the publishing house Berliner Lesekabinett. One on *Die juristische Fakultät an der Universität Berlin* [The Faculty of Law of the University of Berlin] gave occasion to take pleasure in the good results of the "press permission." If only others would follow the good example, Stirner opined, one might hope a bit that "the stiff-legged capital will not let itself be overtaken infinitely far by the swift-footed province," and he took a position with the author against Fr. K. von Savigny and his principle of "later practice" in the legal profession, for this as well as the previous "historical," or better "unphilosophical," school of law were equally "mechanical" and therefore very much needed the reform of the faculty recommended by the author. The other brochure from Berliner Lesekabinett may have especially attracted him by its title: *Die Sitte ist besser als das Gesetz* [Mores are better than law]. It was a protest against a new divorce law, and the reviewer entirely shared the view which the author "won from a freer and more general standpoint."

Beside a witty notice of the latest journal of Buhl, the little *Der Patriot*, there was the book *Königsberger Skizzen* of Karl Rosenkranz, to which a long and very detailed review was dedicated. Already earlier, when the preface of the forthcoming book was submitted to him, Stirner greeted the coming book—with warm words and in a fine way. When it appeared, he examined it in the greatest detail. He said that his own stay in Königsberg had lasted too short a time and already too many years had gone by—Stirner went there, as we know, only in 1829—for him to be able to follow the author with a critique, but he felt free to do it anyway. After reporting several passages, he spoke of the author himself. In a brilliant comparison, such as were constantly so richly at his command, he showed him where in our day, "through which a break has gone," he has remained standing. He

then proves it to him from his book itself: without any sharpness and at pains through this "bonus of bitter almonds" to heighten, not take away the relish in reading it. But Rosenkranz was nonetheless not satisfied with the critique. In his *Aus meinem Tagebuch* [From my diary] he said that the "man of flowery phrases, who is emancipated from God" must have had experience through astral magic, as the Böhmists [followers of Jacob Böhme] say, as he took his atheism to be nothing less than philosophy. For Stirner, he said, has "fully taken on" his *Skizzen* and informed him with sharp words that he no longer belongs to the leading men of the time. Rosenkranz therefore did feel himself hurt.

There were then two questions that were briefly, but independently treated: "Der Doktortitel" [The doctor title] and "Die Hörfreiheit" [The freedom to listen]. Stirner mocked the obsession with titles of the German Michel, who "dares not set foot before the house door without a title," but became very serious when he spoke of the privileges of those graduates before a court of justice in contrast to the "bourgeois plaintiff." The whole doctor title is basically only a money business, and the one who receives a doctorate certainly has no more difficult exam than the one who is tested as a theologian or as an upper school teacher. This statement is all the more interesting as it shows at the same time the grounds on which Stirner—who lacked the means to "buy" the doctor title—attributed it to himself when it seemed good to him. As for the "freedom to listen," he said that it was the other side of freedom of the press, next to freedom to speak. If it is missing, then not even the prince has the freedom to listen to what he wishes, and it will not be better for freedom of the press so long as only the ones speaking and not the listeners also experience the "dishonor of guardianship" of the censor.

More extensive and in individual items more important than the mostly short articles of the *Rheinische Zeitung* are the contributions that Stirner wrote in the same year 1842 for the other of the two large opposition papers of those exciting days: the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung*.

Founded in the year 1837 by Brockhaus, it endeavored "to open a forum for the educated of all parties of the north" and it bore the motto, which was just as proud as it was illogical: "Truth and right, freedom and law." Read in Prussia with fear and trembling, but eagerly, it soon gained an influence of the first rank and exercised a criticism unheard-of until then of the conditions in Prussia. Its circle of collaborators in Berlin was likewise made up, for the most part, of that of the *Rheinische Zeitung*.

Stirner's collaboration on it was extraordinarily active. It began on 6 May in No. 126 and ended only with the year itself in No. 365. None of the 33 contributions, which were marked by a little circle ° or a star * [or, once, with a cross †] were signed, but their origin is established. One article was dated from Königsberg, obviously to cover up where it came from.

The first eleven contributions appear to have gone to Leipzig under the cover name of a straw man "Friese," before Stirner named himself to the newspaper as "gymnasium teacher Schmidt." Whether this Friese existed in reality or only in name can no longer be determined. At any rate the author received for the 33 contributions a collective fee of 73 talers and 22 Ngr [Neugroschen].

Here too it was the events of the day on which Stirner above all attached his observations. Bruno Bauer's dismissal in Bonn and the separate vote that Marheineke, whose pupil Stirner too once was, gave on that much talked about occasion, were discussed and light was shed on the "nest of contradictions" of the offended theologian, who nevertheless was the only one who attended to Bauer "with fatherly warmth."

Königsberg drew attention to itself again and again, not only through the complaint of the merchants there to the king because of the Russian incursions, which were repeated verbatim and were dated from there, but also through Walesrode's *Glossen und Randzeichnungen* and again through Rosenkranz's *Skizzen*. The latter received a new, friendly examination, though Stirner "from easily apparent grounds cannot go into a critique," but limited himself to emphasizing the "middle height" of the standpoint of its author and in a second

note quoted the passage on "freedom to teach." A large space, almost overburdened with quotations, was then taken by the trial of Dr. Johann Jacoby, which caused a sensation far beyond Prussia. Jacoby was acquitted of the charge of high treason in the first instance, but was sentenced to two years in prison for lèse-majesté, "brazen, disrespectful reproaches," and mocking the state laws. He had appealed this verdict. His openly published *Rechtfertigung* [Defense] was now repeated in excerpts and likewise—after some reports on the person of the accused man himself, the Königsberg doctor and later representative—the finding of the high court judges was repeated, by which, as the article said in conclusion, "as much insight into the important trial is provided as the space of a newspaper allows." An equally large space was allowed two months later for the "further defense" of Jacoby in the trial that had been hanging in the balance for a year and a half—of a "man" who allowed an idea to become "personal" in himself and "has to bear the temporal sufferings of this idea in his own body." As is known, the trial ended in a judgment of the second instance with Jacoby's complete exoneration, to the very great rage of the king—with a response that, as Stirner had already stated, "many had probably already given on their own." Even if he belongs to the contemporary history, he is still today a telling example of the madness of a government that does not tolerate even the least objection, and for the arrogance and outrageousness of tone which it dares to adopt against its subjects. We enjoy leafing again through the forgotten pages. At the same time the detailed way in which Stirner treated it turns the guess into a probability, that he is identical with the "Dr. Schmidt," who on the occasion of an appeal for Jacoby in Berlin subscribed 15 Ngr.

Shorter mentions of other writings of the day occurred in between: *Die juristische Fakultät der Universität Berlin* [The Faculty of Law of the University of Berlin] (under Savigny), likewise known from the *Rheinische Zeitung*; that of Buhl on *Der Beruf der preussischen Presse* [The calling of the Prussian press] and on *Die Bedeutung der Provincialstände in Preussen* [The significance of the representatives of the provincial classes in Prussia]; as well as the anonymous study of *Hegels Lehre von der Religion und Kunst* [Hegel's

doctrine of religion and art] by Bruno Bauer (which became for Stirner at the same time the occasion for his own fundamental work). He shed light on all of them, as well as on the brochure *Was bestimmt das Gesetz über die Absetzbarkeit der Geistlichen und Schullehrer in Preussen?* [What does the law say about the removability of clerics and school teachers in Prussia?], which came about through the suspension of the intrepid upper school teacher Witt in Königsberg, who participated in the editorial staff of a liberal paper there.

Questions and events of the day were touched on: A curious letter of unknown origin motivated by the Jewish laws and addressed to the king was the occasion for a priceless mockery of the axiom that "for every right there is a duty," whereas in another place Christian love precisely with regard to these Jews, which really "can give them no other law than that of baptism," was put in the correct light. An even sharper ridicule also fell on the fear of caricatures that could touch on the "sacred," and on those who therefore immediately involved the police.

Of the highest interest, however, and an especial attraction for us must be what Stirner said about his own circle, that of "The Free." He reported on it on several occasions. First in a prefatory note in which he once and for all confirmed the already doubted existence of the society. They, "The Free," are, though, no society in the actual sense of the word, no society "civilly constituted with statutes"—which could offer the police a hold. That is why its members guard against hampering their effectiveness through a formal constitution and thus "preserve an intellectual power from the danger of falling, through rashness, to a material powerlessness." They were just neither here nor there, but everywhere, and he, Stirner, did not find it worthwhile to go to the first party he came to and not find himself among the society's members. In a characteristic, detailed article he then rejected the raging storm of conservative newspapers and their "hardly worthy attacks" and demanded "a calm and fearless investigation" regarding the "important contemporary event." "For," he said, "whoever believes he is allowed an open word on the life and even on the value of intellectual efforts of the time, he should at least show in his attitude a

level measure of education, show in his statements the dignity of mature thinking, and in his criticism reveal the traces of an attempted penetration into the matter." He then gave time and attention to what "The Free" really wanted, demanded for them the right to their conviction, and just as much the right "also to acquaint others" with that conviction, and he once again made the point that they form no society at all (which would not be unlawful, but would be unwise). As for leaving the church, which they have been accused of, this is an inner step, not an exterior one. Their conviction is directed not against the powerlessness of the church, but against the power of the state, and what they want is that "the state no longer attach state citizenship to a religious profession." The state, however, is based on the "principle of education" and only the truly educated is free, a "free spirit" in the purest meaning of the word. Therefore the "real significance of The Free" exists only regarding the state, and, as Stirner with restrained but transparent scorn said, its opposition to one of the state's institutions is a loyal one; it is, like, e.g., the opposition to the censor, a "legal opposition." In a final remark he declared that the so-called "confession of faith" of "The Free" is "the most ridiculous product of the world," is a mystification over which he himself "has heard a number of 'The Free' heartily laugh in merriment."

Two important articles followed. In one Stirner answered in his fashion the question thrown out by State Minister von Schön in his brochure *Woher und Wohin?* [Whence and whither?]. In a case taken from close at hand—that of a well-meaning, but tyrannical father and his obedient son, who however finally rejected the marriage offered him—he pointed out that this "double willingness of family life"—miraculously—came from the time of Peter the Great, who first abolished that law which made children dependent on the commands of their parents in the matter of marriage. Then he made the point: "Civilization is that 'whither' of self-determination, is its mother," and to the further question 'whither' that should lead, he gave the answer: "It should lead to complete freedom, which does not surrender itself for the sake of another." Then he turned to the statesman himself, whose

answer appeared to him sufficient for the time being, "since world history changes by steps." The other article is entitled "Die Lebenslustigen" [Those in love with life]. These "Lebenslustigen" were for Stirner the theologians, especially those theologians of the Lutheran theological faculties at the Prussian universities, who had put together a report on Bruno Bauer and his history of the authors of the synoptical Gospels and who were now finished off in every detail by Stirner—these theologians, who do not have the courage finally to die and receive the death blow "from the hand of a higher principle." Stirner's derision of "their tenacious love of life and their fear of death" became scorn here and was devastating.

In the end smaller highlights close this long series of articles for the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung*: "Politische Ephemeriden" [Political diary entries] on "Zeitcontroverse" [Contemporary controversies] and on "Kunst und Wissenschaft" [Art and science]. The new issues of Buhl's *Der Patriot* are taken more seriously than the first; the book of Edgar Bauer on his brother and his brother's opponents is reviewed almost enthusiastically; and once again at the end the new divorce law supplied the opportunity for a sharper definition of "holy matrimony," and it was the position of the Jews in the municipal constitution, to which the attention of the reader was attracted anew in apt remarks by castigating the privileges and damning the force through which they were able to keep them. We leave now the newspaper articles of Stirner and, coming out of the front garden as it were, turn to his first literary works, which are more important and, in recognition of their greater significance, are also all signed by him. They form the preliminary steps on which we climb up with him to the great construction of his life.

Much more important, as was just said, than Stirner's first publications and his newspaper correspondences are the independent, self-contained, literary works that have been found again, four in all,

which preceded his life's work, before he turned with it to the wider public. They, at least in the case of the first two, can without fear be placed beside it. They may be so designated as literary works since they go far beyond the bounds of correspondences, and the occasions for them are no more than stimuli from which independent and intellectually creative essays came into being.

The first two stand among the correspondences of the *Rheinische Zeitung* in its supplements and both carry as signature the name of their author: Stirner.

One, at the same time the most extensive and most important contribution from Stirner's pen, is entitled *Das unwahre Princip unserer Erziehung oder der Humanismus und Realismus* [The false principle of our education, or humanism and realism] and appeared in the supplements to the four numbers 100, 102, 104, and 109 of 10, 12, 14, and 19 April. It must have attracted him as a teacher to first make in the field where his closest experience lay an attempt, on a trial basis as it were, to develop his ideas of the personal self-rule of the individual. "The school question is a life question." Are we creatures, who can only be trained, or are we educated to be the creators of our later life? Having posed the question, he begins his investigation, for whose point of departure he takes a writing of Theodor Heinsius. The latter sought to reconcile the two great, bitterly inimical parties of humanism and realism in his principle of education. Stirner kept the names, "as little accurate as they are," and considered first the methods of both directions and their results.

The old classical education of the humanists, which extended back into the previous century, and the other education that went along with it, which emphasized a knowledge of the Bible, were basically only formal, drew their vital forces from antiquity, and as a result achieved an empty elegance.

In contrast to the humanist, the education of realism arose in the time of the Enlightenment, and the more the power of authority of the former saw itself suppressed, the more the latter became the universal one, culminating in the basic principles of human rights: equality and freedom.

As the humanist education did not go beyond formalism, so the realist did not go beyond the "practical man." If the one is not to share the fate of the other—downfall—then the two must unite in the goal of the formation of good taste.

But even then both will still die. Let the rearing that is more than both be entrusted, not to the philosopher, with whom the Reformation period dies, but rather to that new principle, which lets the will blossom forth out of the downfall of knowledge. For that is the only thing that matters: that knowledge develops into will. From the epoch of freedom of thought will follow that of freedom of will, and in it the personal and free men of the future will arise, will be reared to be rational, not sensible people.

What one still wants today is not the strength of opposition, but submissiveness—"useful citizens," not self-activating individuals. What does realism bring forth today? True, no longer mere scholars, but "highly civilized, educated" subjects: "smiling slave owners and themselves—slaves"; not free, but loyal spirits; people of principles, not "principled men."

The eternal characters, who always create themselves anew in eternal rejuvenation, will only come when all rearing comes down to only the one goal: personality!

When knowledge is no longer educated, but rather the person comes to the development of himself, when not only the drive for knowledge, but rather also the drive of the will is cultivated, when the child will learn the main thing—to feel himself—then we will have reached the new goal. Does one fear that with this new principle authority will perish? "Whoever is a complete person does not need to be an authority." The frankness of the child that degenerates into impudence will break on the hardness of my own freedom.

"In this universal education, therefore, because the lowest and the highest meet together in it, we come upon the true equality of all for the first time, the equality of free people: only freedom is equality."

Do we need a new name for the new principle?—Good, then we name those who follow it personalists. Once more with a word on what matters: "Knowledge must die and rise again as will and create itself anew each day as a free person."

Thus concludes the investigation of "the false principle of our education," which we may fearlessly place beside *Der Einzige*. The great thinker, the original creator of entirely new points of view, indeed expresses here already with complete clarity, with his irresistible lucidity and boldness, and in his own characteristic language, the final goals in a part of that infinite field, which he was later to develop in its entire vastness. With what sovereign grace he dominates his material, with what ruthlessness he shoves away whatever stands in his way, how he is already entirely himself! Yes, almost even warmer and more attractive sounds his call for the self-rule of the individual here, than later, when a rigid logic often appears to have completely taken over the words.

The first of his larger and independent works, with which we see him appear before the public, will always remain one of his most important and most beneficial. Was it any wonder that a man, who captured the principle of education so deeply and at the same time so originally, could find no place as a teacher in the stifling schoolrooms of the state training institutions?

The other essay appeared in the supplement to No. 165 of 14 June and carries the title "Kunst und Religion" [Art and religion]. Even if this is not stated, it is obviously induced by the publication of an anonymous work of Bruno Bauer, with which he continued his still disguised battle against Hegel, titled *Hegels Lehre von der Religion und Kunst; von dem Standpunkt des Glaubens aus beurteilt* [Hegel's doctrine of religion and art; judged from the standpoint of faith]. It is not a very extensive work, but is nevertheless highly important.

Hegel, Stirner says, rightly treated art before religion. For with the embodiment of the ideal—achieved in and through words, pictures, and views of the artist—the split of man with himself is completed: in him arises religion. This religious man acts toward the idea of the artist as to his second I, an object with which his reason competes in the joys and sorrows of an eternal battle. For religion is a matter of reason! Just as the genius of the artist can only develop itself in freedom, so too is religion available to everyone. Its love too, the "most characteristic essence of religion," is basically just nothing but reason: the love of the child for his "object," the mother, e.g., proves it. An object is essential to all love. But this object must remain a mystery, must always appear new and attractive, if it is not to melt away. It is the same with reason as with love: the mystery makes the matter of reason into a matter of the heart.

Therefore art, the creator of this object as idea, may not stand behind religion. For religion strives to make the object, which the artist through the whole strength and fullness of his interior has "concentrated" into a splendid creation, again into a subject, to reconcile God with men, to draw down the ideal to itself. He never succeeds. It is the effort of an eternal longing that tortures him. Every new genius of art improves the old object into a fresher, newer formation. But art not only transfigures it, rather it always snatches it again from religion, in that it demands its object back so as to laughingly form it always anew. Therefore art always stands at the end of every religion—in order to "make religion" ever anew.

Philosophy is separated from both, art and religion: if one of them creates the object and the other lives only in dependence on itself, then philosophy lays on both "the crushing hand and breath of freedom." Occupied with itself alone, it concerns itself with no object. It seeks only reason, i.e., itself. But enough of that; for he has not undertaken to speak about philosophy now, says Stirner.

We see in what inseparable connection art and religion stand for him: in spite of the mutual battle, each creates the other. The victory of philosophy, freedom, means for Stirner the downfall of both.

That religion was long since aware of its downfall is shown by its now already long lasting, desperate death-struggle; how very much art feels itself exhausted in the never-ending relation, which eats up its strength, is shown only too clearly by its attempts in our time to rejuvenate itself. When it has freed itself from the vampire of religion, when it seeks its object no longer outside itself, but in itself, when art becomes life, it can still rescue itself.

Stirner's greatest gift—to be able to see and place all relationships in the widest perspective, to separate the great, which is what matters, from the small, and yet to use the small so as to attain the great—also shows itself above all in this work, which without doubt possesses more value than all that Hegel and Bruno Bauer together have said about the same subject. For one sentence of the genius, who catches the world and men and raises them above themselves to new goals, weighs more than the thousandfold efforts of the talented, who seek to find their way in them and come to terms with them, yet without being able to free themselves.

Two years later Stirner put two other independent literary works of importance at the disposal of his old acquaintance Buhl.

Ludwig Buhl published at his own expense in the year 1844 in Mannheim the "first and only" issue of a *Berliner Monatsschrift*, a small volume of 330 pages. The origin of this modest undertaking offers such an extremely characteristic contribution to the history of the relationship between press and censor at that time, that we would like to linger on it for a moment.

In the middle of 1843 the publisher and the editor of the undertaking had delivered to the censor the prospectus and three articles meant for the first number and then three more articles, but they were negatively decided, i.e., the permission to print was denied them. The appeals were rejected by the High Court of the Prussian Censor. Buhl then, as was said, had the "first and last" volume printed in Mannheim by Heinrich Hoff and privately published. Having become longer than

twenty pages, it did not need to be submitted to the censor even in Prussia, yet in Baden the danger of confiscation was less great. Buhl opened it with an "Open Confession," in which he declared that he was not at all sanguinely caught in an illusion over the result of his attempt. "We knew," he said, "that a power, which is based on authority, would not endure a process of subversion of all existing relations. Precisely for that reason we made it our task to analyze the supports and the euphemistic pretexts of power: state, law, judicial system, legal order, legal progress, religion, nationality, patriotism, and whatever the words might be." To be able to do this, however, he continued (he is speaking here of his prospectus), under the eyes of the power, we of course had to hold back our final word. "Even if we were not allowed to attack the state as such and present it as a manifestation of non-freedom, we still came to the same result if we presented all the current state forms and existing constitutions as not corresponding to the concept of true and universal freedom."

If these sentences show how far the criticism at that time had progressed—it boldly dared to go against the sacred existence of the state itself—then the prospectus did the same, saying: "We wish to investigate the foundations and the prerequisites of the state and the concept of the state itself." It remains very regrettable that the undertaking did not come about, but we still wish to take pleasure in the fact that at least its "first and only" issue—and with it the two articles by Stirner—has been preserved.

The first of the two, signed with "Stirner," carries the heading "Einiges Vorläufige vom Liebesstaat" [Some preliminaries from the love state]. Let us hear first the judgment of the wise men from the censor court. According to it the essay contains at "the beginning a comparison of the political ideas on freedom and equality developed in the well known circular letter of von Stein with the underlying thoughts of the French Revolution. This introduction follows the author's own view of pure freedom and absolute self-determination. In conclusion he declares his theory to be incompatible not only with the existing state principle, but also with the love and fidelity on which it

rests. With this he has delivered a judgment on himself. The tendency of the whole essay is reprehensible according to Art. IV. 1 of the pertinent regulation (the censor regulation). The introduction of the essay is also counted in this tendency. By leaving out or changing several passages, it could be permitted to be printed, but it stands in such an inseparable connection with the maxims derived from it that it must share the fate of the whole according to the principal point throughout." A sad fate, to be sure, to be judged and silenced by such minds!

Although the censor court has this time kindly lifted from us the effort of the "table of contents," let it still be immodestly added that Stirner goes first to the basis of the deliberately meaningful circular letter. In two points its author, Freiherr von Stein, agrees with the goals of the French Revolution: in the doctrine of equality, i.e., in bringing everyone to the same level of subservience; and in that of freedom, i.e., the freedom to fulfill one's duty, the moral freedom, the bourgeois freedom of the revolution.

Stirner then further treats the center of this last: the duty of love. In revolutionary freedom, grown out of the principle of egoism, man determines himself "purely from himself," in love he does this only for the other's sake. There is a difference, whether one is a loving person or a rational one. The triumph of love is a loss of will power. The loveless, however, reject this, they are the dissatisfied and ridicule the adage: Peace is the first duty of the citizen.

It is only a prelude to a larger work, which was to be concerned with the phenomena of the love state, the last and most complete form of the state, that Stirner strikes up here, a work that probably never came about in the form planned. But the leitmotiv sounds loud and clear through these few pages.

The second article of Stirner in Buhl's *Berliner Monatsschrift* is a review of the book *Les Mystères de Paris* [The mysteries of Paris] of Eugène Sue. It bears the signature Max Schmidt, and we must come back to this erroneous mixture of name and pseudonym in order to explain it. But there cannot be the slightest doubt that the article stems from Stirner.

In order to understand how Stirner could turn his attention to such a work, one must recall that at that time Sue's novel caused the most enormous sensation everywhere, including Germany. It went from hand to hand in numerous translations, and was everywhere devoured greedily. As incomprehensible as this impression is to today's generation—that long forgotten, dusty, voluminous work is at most still brought out by lending library hoarders and only on seamstresses would it still attain the old effect—it will be explicable to us to some extent if we remember that Sue for the first time drew the social element into belles lettres with his sensational story, in that he brought the honest feeling of poverty into an intimate contact with what was till then considered a higher kind of man and made a closer place beside it than it ever had before.

Thus the book was at that time taken completely seriously almost everywhere. One overlooked his ghastly impossibilities with the same enthusiasm as his inner hollowness and became wildly intoxicated on the certainly quite unusual imagination of the Frenchman.

Even in Bauer's *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung* there appeared from the pen of Szeliga an effusive, endless article in which it was seriously subjected to a criticism as to what in truth was beneath it.

The review by "Max Schmidt," i.e., Stirner, was already written earlier.

It shows us Stirner from his witty side. With cutting scorn he scourges the false sentimentality of the bourgeoisie, who—a little tear

of pity in the eye—are hypocritically preparing to convert the sinner, bring vice onto the path of virtue, and take the outcasts again into the arms of society.

But, you good people, have you ever thought about whether the good is then really worth striving for? Is it not perhaps only just an empty illusion that only lives in your imagination?

Thus Stirner asked and then showed in the individual figures of the novel—whose author "without any deeper and more powerful insight in the nature of society" laid on each of them "every time the same measure, namely that of morality"—to where these efforts of good people, to bring evil people to the good, lead. The results that we, with him, reach are truly astonishing.

For Stirner all these endeavors are attempted cures, not of a sick body, but of a decrepit one, "improvements where there is nothing more to improve." Our time is tired and old, not sick, he said. Therefore do not torment them and yourselves any longer. Let it die!

Thus ended Stirner's first literary activity, which preceded his great work. Neither for the *Hallisches Jahrbuch* and *Deutsches Jahrbuch* of Arnold Ruge, nor for Bauer's *Allgemeine Litteratur-Zeitung* did he make contributions.

He was silent for some time and only took up his pen to collaborate on a journal again in order to answer, as a matter of self-defense, attacks that were directed against his book, the deed of his life.

But this belongs in the next chapter, which will be dedicated exclusively to the consideration of this deed.

Now we still have to occupy ourselves with the greatest external event in this life: Stirner's second marriage, to Marie Dähnhardt.

It was probably in the circle of "The Free" that Stirner met a young lady whom he had first seen in the home of the later founder of the *National-Zeitung*, Dr. Friedrich Zabel. She was Marie Dähnhardt.

Marie Wilhelmine Dähnhardt was born on 1 June 1818 in Gadebusch near Schwerin, the daughter of the pharmacist Helmuth Ludwig Dähnhardt and his wife Maria, née Brünger. She was baptized on 7 June according to the Lutheran rite. Coming from a well-to-do bourgeois family, she enjoyed a good education and was early moved by the longing for emancipation of those days, which found an eloquent expression, among other things, in [Karl] Gutzkow's book *Wally, die Zweiflerin* [Wally, the doubter], which is now forgotten, but at that time was devoured by women. This longing saw George Sand as its model, though she never attained it.

Marie Dähnhardt came to Berlin against the will of her family, to live her life in broader circles than would have ever been possible in the limited circumstances of her home town.

To be sure, her first traces in Berlin can be determined only in the year of her marriage to Stirner, in 1843, when she lived from 21 January until 4 April in Alexanderstrasse, with the English language teacher, W. Turnbull, with whom she took lessons, and from 30 August until 21 October in Friedrichstrasse 189, with the decorator F. Bodinus. But it is certain that she was already in Berlin in 1838, when she was twenty years old, and at any rate was not a stranger there. Her father died early.

Marie Dähnhardt's marriage to Max Stirner took place on 21 October 1843, in fact in the dwelling of the bridegroom, in Neu Kölln, Am Wasser 23. It was done "with the consent of her mother."

Stirner had shortly before moved to Neu Kölln, Am Wasser, after he left the family of his first wife in the dwelling in Neue Friedrichstrasse 79, which he kept for five years—and where we last saw him. He had lived there a whole decade, with some interruptions.

Here in the house of Neu Kölln, Am Wasser, whose owner Schöpke was a dyer in fine colors, the young married couple lived in a roomy apartment with a large "salon" during the years they were together.

The "story of the wedding" of Stirner has been so much written and talked about—far more than his whole life taken all together—that here too in this story of his life it may not be overlooked, but rather must be given its place, since an attempt should be made to put it, like everything else, in its rightful light. This is not quite easy, since the assertions and memories are sharply contradictory. For, as is the way with anecdotes that stay the longest in the memory of most people, carried from mouth to mouth, they also take on in each person a somewhat changed form, so as finally to be something almost foreign to their former reality. So it was also with the narration of this marriage, which caused such a big stir, aroused so much indignation and so much laughter.

Stripped of all romantic additions, it will have taken place in the following form, which is still interesting enough:

The wedding was carried out by Oberkonsistorialrat Marot of the Neue Kirche in Berlin, a city-wide personality, who had been chosen by Bruno Bauer because of his more liberated views.

The marriage witnesses and guests assembled in the newly rented dwelling on the morning of 2 October, shortly before the noonday meal; they were not, as has been related, just fetched out of the bars. By no means were they in any kind of solemn mood.

The marriage witnesses were Bruno Bauer and Buhl. Among the guests present, as far as is known, were the young poet Wilhelm Jordan, Julius Faucher, an Assessor Kochious (or Kochius), and a young Englishwoman, a friend of the bride. There were certainly also a number of other friends and acquaintances.

Buhl is said to have been obliged to get out of his shirtsleeves and into his shabby everyday coat, when the pastor entered; the cards, with which they had been playing, were also put aside.

They had to wait for the bride. When she entered, Marot must have been very astonished to find her in a simple dress and without the bridal decoration of "myrtle wreath and veil."

His request for a Bible was not successful because there was none at hand.

In the meantime the short and, under the circumstances, very accelerated ceremony took place. The guests looked out the windows, instead of listening to the "dry, sober" speech that suited the circumstances.

When the question of the rings was posed, a new difficulty emerged: the rings had not been ordered at all, probably through forgetfulness.

Then Bruno Bauer (according to Jordan's recollection it was supposed to have been Stirner himself, yet generally Bauer is mentioned) drew from his pocket his elongated, crocheted money purse, which was customary at that time, deliberately shook to one side the certainly meager contents of silver and copper coins, and drew out two brass rings, which he handed over to the preacher, while he reckoned that they could "hold the marriage together just as well, or better" than gold ones.

And with these brass rings Max Stirner and Marie Dähnhardt were married.

Marot was invited to the dinner and punch afterward, but declined and left, and the wedding took the "merry course" of other weddings, indeed an even merrier one. The young married couple did not go on a wedding trip, but remained with their lively guests.

The story of the exchange of rings—exaggerated by most to an "intentional demonstration," described by another side, on the other hand, as the natural result of the moment without any special or secondary aim –soon took on the most curious forms. It was passed from mouth to mouth, and while some spoke with positive certainty that curtain rings had been used, others twaddled of an unheard-of insult to sacred institutions. In the final analysis, however, the matter was nothing but the complete indifference of the persons involved in an external action that in their eyes by no means possessed a far-reaching, inner significance, and was only carried out from regard for outside appearances, which was perhaps not to be avoided.

The married couple led a quiet and inconspicuous marriage and continued to live in the old, accustomed way.

After we have gotten to know Stirner, our next interest will be directed to the young wife. Since she drew the attention of so many to herself, it is not difficult to sketch Marie Dähnhardt's picture: a likeable one in every respect.

She was a slim, lovely blond of short, full figure with noticeably rich ornaments in her hair, which she wore, to describe it with the expression of that time, à la neige—in ringlets over her temples—with a soft, rosy complexion, of a quick and energetic nature, "thoroughly sensible," but without any special intellectual gifts. She exercised an unmistakable attraction on the men, more through her natural healthiness than through an actual beauty—for a beauty she was not. She was aware of this force, at least she became so in Berlin.

She had an excellent upbringing, knew how to conduct herself well in society, kept herself serious, and associated at Hippel's among "The Free," where she had the nickname Marius Daenhardius, as casually as any other guest. There is no doubt that she "smoked cigars," was seen with a long pipe in the rooms of the students, played billiards—and in fact excellently—and drank the Munich beer that was shipped to Berlin at that time out of the same large mugs as the men. There is also no doubt that she did all this not only from an inner desire, but also from that drive in which she sought to emancipate herself from her bourgeois and "well-mannered" upbringing.

It has often, and only too understandably, been asserted that she led "such a life" only for her husband's sake. It is not true. That drive which led her to Berlin, which she gave into more and more, which led her with a lack of concern to the table of the loud men and among the young students, which even let her take part in the late-evening

excursions of the group to the bordellos of Old Königsmauer—where they went, of course, only to have great fun there until they were thrown out—this drive, which let her take part in such excursions in men's clothing, had already gripped her before she knew Stirner.

That her original desire drove her further than she intended at first, or could even suspect, was not his fault. With his calm, passive nature, it is quite unthinkable that he ever led her astray or talked her into anything that would have been against her own will. This is to be still further established.

It is also certain that she did not understand her husband from the beginning. The loud and noisy bar comrades at Hippel's, among whom she sat so naturally, still a child in disposition and inexperience, with whom she so often heard wild talk, innuendo, and dirty jokes, which she did not understand and only for that reason could listen to so calmly—"The Free"—probably seemed to her much freer than her quiet husband, who let her do what she wanted, and, without any knowledge of human nature, as she was, she let him later pay secretly what was owed the others, if there can be talk at all of any kind of debt.

Perhaps, and this appears after all most probable, she never considered at that time what dominated some and moved the others, but swam along in the merry current as her youth rightly offered it to her, and was, through the sad veil of later experience that covered over those days, no longer able to recognize what lay beneath his surface—confused by the muddle of her remorse.

She went into that circle voluntarily and gladly, because she liked it there, and she voluntarily made it her own—not the tone, for that she was too tasteful, but its free and, despite all its excesses, still so beautiful and at times splendid attitude toward life, though it was not refined. Proud and not without boldness she followed her own inclinations.

That she did what she wished, and that Stirner let her do what she wished—that of course may have let her appear in the eyes of the marriage-slaves as detestable as it later did to her, but it can only make the two of them more likeable to us. Every act of making up the mind for the other, for that matter, would not have fit at all into the nature of those involved, for whom "marriage" meant only a loose band that was thrown around them purely externally. And not on the "unfaithfulness" of the wife—how ridiculous!—did "this marriage perish," but simply and only under the pressure of the circumstances in which he and she unfortunately all too soon found themselves.

Marie Dähnhardt's good taste always kept her from shouting her affairs from the housetops, which were her business and only hers—and which naturally will not be pursued here. Toward the public she was always and for everyone the unapproachable wife, whom no one would have dared to approach. Only once did it come to a scene: she had at first not understood the ambiguous meaning of a remark; when she was made aware of it, her indignation is said to have been quite apparent.

Universally respected and universally popular, like Stirner himself, she was the undisputed female ornament of the circle when she appeared in it. For she was by no means the only woman in it, as we have seen. Among the women who associated with her there, she is said to have been especially friendly with the future wife of Dr. Wiss and likewise well acquainted with Karoline Faucher.

The last year of his teaching activity and the first of his marriage with Marie Dähnhardt—approximately from 1843 until 1845—may be viewed as the highpoint of Max Stirner's life, if such an assumption may be build on purely external facts.

His time not being taken up all too much by his activity in the girls' school of Mme. Gropius, Stirner had enough free time left to put the finishing touches to his life's work, which as a whole was already there. Everyone who knows what that means will designate precisely such a time—of still unfulfilled expectation and hope and yet already done work—as the happiest in the life of a creative spirit.

He had a young wife whom, whatever else might be said, he loved.

There stood open to him a circle of men who—more and more convinced of his significance—without exception respected, stimulated, and always gladly saw him in their midst.

And he had—for the first time in his life—money. For Marie Dähnhardt, who had lost her father early, was in possession of what for that time was a considerable fortune. It amounted to ten thousand talers—according to other accounts even thirty thousand. The first number is probably correct.

The husband was, therefore, frequently envied, and the sun of happiness stood in the sky shining on and warming the young married couple, who did not think of clouds and storms, and who lived completely without care or concern the short time that was granted them.

Yet, leaving the two for a short while, we turn now to the work that no longer belongs to him, who created it, and to her, to whom it was dedicated, but to us all.

Note to page 92:

Karl Maria Kertbeny (1824–1882), the Austro-Hungarian writer and translator, who later coined the term "homosexual," mentioned the event in his *Silhouetten und Reliquien* (1861–1863), vol. 2, p. 202:

> On New Year's Eve in 1847 I had a rather long dissipation in my room. Max Stirner, the author of *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* was also there, and I think as well the profligate Hieronymus Thruhm (?) and the sky-high Friedrich Sass, called "Literarchos." Well, as always, we broke open a dozen bottles, and when I finally staggered to bed long after midnight, all the *beaux restes* [leftovers] were left on the table and chairs.

Chapter Five

Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum

Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum

1845

Publication – Confiscation and release in Saxony – Banned in Prussia – Stirner and the police – Universal acceptance and success – The book – Attempted evaluation – Criticism – Stirner's replies – Rationality and the individual – Prospect

In the circle of "The Free" a rumor had spread in the course of time that Max Stirner was working on an extensive work, to which he had "already piled up page upon page" and that was still growing, "including in it the whole characteristic fabric of his thinking."

But no one would have known what to say in detail about this work. Stirner never went into questions about it, nor did he let anyone even see or read a single page of his work. He himself betrayed the "secret of his life" only to the extent that he occasionally used to point to his desk where his "I" lay hidden.

The existence of the work "could also be a fable," and was already viewed as such by some, when suddenly in the last days of October 1844, it appeared before the public under the title *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* [The unique one and his property].

Originally this title—and the remark of Stirner above speaks for it—was to be "I." It was dropped, to appear over the second principal section of the work.

As author Stirner used the name under which he had written his first works and which he bore in the circle of his acquaintances; as publisher on the title page was one of the most respected book publishing firms in Germany, Otto Wigand in Leipzig, the courageous and widely known publisher of the most important radical publications of that time, the publisher of the enterprises of Ruge and of Feuerbach, and himself intimately engaged with heart and soul in the battles of the time. The year stated in the book was 1845. A friendly relation united Stirner and Wigand; the latter thought highly of his

new author and always spoke of him with great respect. Incidentally, Stirner was in Leipzig in 1844, probably to discuss the details of the publication of his lifework with Wigand.

The trust that the latter placed in the work was shown best by the thoroughly high quality presentation with which he provided it. The first edition of *Der Einzige* is one of the best printed works of this publishing house: a magnificent volume of almost five hundred pages, on the best paper, with generously wide margins, and in a large, clear print, almost flawlessly printed by J. B. Hirschfeld in Leipzig. This edition, which has become rare today, was priced two and a half talers for a sewn copy in bright dust jacket. It surpassed its two later ones in every respect.

The book bore the dedication "To my darling Marie Dähnhardt." She had been Stirner's wife for a year.

We are not wrong if we assume that the plan for the work occurred in the year 1842, at the time when Stirner was developing so many of his ideas in shorter works, works that then gave way to the large one in 1844, when it was delivered and printed. It can be assumed that the work was written in the time period of a year and half—from 1843 until around the middle of 1844.

Those in power always try to suppress inimical thinking and to hinder its spreading. In Prussia the reins of a brazen and foolish censor had been less restrictive since Friedrich Wilhelm IV ascended the throne, but this soon came to an end with the publication of Herwegh's letter to the king, when the situation became worse than before. In Saxony a similar reaction had begun. It's true that writings over twenty pages were free in 1844, i.e., they did not need to be submitted to the censor. But for this reason there was a greater danger of seizure and confiscation, against which there was no judicial protection.

To avoid this at least partly, the Leipziger publisher resorted to a drastic measure. While the requisite copy of the edition was being delivered to the regional director, wagons loaded with the copies ready to be sent out already stood on the next street corner, and as soon as the receipt of the authority was in the hands of the publisher, they were delivered at a gallop from bookseller to bookseller, so that by the time the officials had seen the book and wanted to confiscate it, they mostly were left empty-handed.

The same thing happened with Stirner's work. The regional director in Leipzig immediately ordered its confiscation, but only 250 copies fell into their hands.

The confiscation was already lifted a few days later by the Ministry of the Interior, because the book was "too absurd" to be dangerous. The "very interesting" grounds for the decision, which the *Brockhaus'sche Allgemeine Presszeitung* of 8 November 1844 promised to report, were unfortunately never published, and the wisdom of the highly praiseworthy authorities can never be grasped in its full dimension. Suffice it to say that for Stirner, who was so thoroughly occupied with the question of the freedom of the press and had written his work with full circumspection so as to "trick" the state, his intention succeeded brilliantly. **"Let my people, if they will, go without liberty of free press, I will manage to print by force or ruse; I get my permission to print only from—*myself* and my strength."** He did get it for himself, and whereas the most harmless scribbling was outlawed, the most radical and "most dangerous" book of that and all time was allowed to go unhindered from hand to hand—then and still today.

Did anyone ever inwardly rejoice more over this fact than he, who smuggled his precious goods, so boldly and cleverly at the same time, over the border that despotism had drawn over free thought?

In Prussia, incidentally, *Der Einzige* was banned before Christmas, as it was also in Kurhessen and Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and the ban has, as far as can be determined, never been lifted. This did not,

of course, hinder the new publication from being eagerly read everywhere, especially among the young students, going from hand to hand. Here too the complaint of Savigny, the Minister of Justice, to the king was confirmed: that forbidden writings were the most widespread and read, and that the ban and confiscation brought about exactly the opposite of their intended effect.

With the police, it may be said right away, Stirner never came into any kind of conflict. They did not even keep a file on him, as they did on most of the circle, and when they occasionally mentioned him in, say, those on Buhl, they were ill informed; they wrote the name only from hearsay in genuine Berlin dialect "Styrna." When on the occasion of the *Gegenwort* they conducted research, they did not find him, but rather as a result of a confusion of names they found a completely harmless Real Gymnasium teacher Schmidt, who to the reproaches of his authorities was able indignantly to protest his complete innocence. About Stirner himself, this "gentleman of mature years," the police knew "to bring out only good things." Naturally he has also been reproached for that. As if he had nothing better to do, and as if it required courage to fight a running battle with the subordinate organs of power, while one was preparing for the most deadly blow against the innermost being of this power itself!

The general reception that the work found was a sweeping one; today it would be called "sensational."

People were immediately occupied in a lively way with the new publication, which so suddenly came from complete darkness into the glaring public light of day. By Christmas 1844 the book was already in the hands of those who brought any interest at all for the radical progress of those days. The youth especially, as was said, eagerly seized the daring deed.

But the reception was as diverse as it could only be for such a work. If for some no expression of admiration was too great—they expected from it the beginning of a new time of thinking and living, and they rightly called the author a genius—others threw the book away scornfully, indignant over such "nonsense," for it could only be nonsense, because it dared to shake the "cornerstones of all moral and social life." Most, however, did not rightly know what they should say, and many kept silent. But all did suspect that they had here an extraordinary phenomenon.

If some—the deeply prejudiced who could not at all understand how one could dare to submit at all to human criticism concepts that stood so firmly "from all eternity," such as right, duty, morality, etc.—sought to characterize him as the "devil's advocate," who not only dared to criticize them, but to destroy them, then indeed the others, who viewed these concepts, to be sure, not as eternally fixed, but still always as forming the background of our actions, were no less indignant to see this ground suddenly withdrawn from their feet, and they, who did not yet know where to stand now, could only explain the phenomenon by assuming that the author wanted to have a joke at their expense, mocking them as well as himself.

See how devilish a man can be!—the former cried; no, no man can be so bad, the latter consoled. Some found the confirmation of their assumption in the caustic derision of Stirner, the others found it in his amusing irony.

Even the Liberals shied away. The politicians laughed: What rational human being could doubt that the "state" is "order" and deny its necessity? The Socialists grumbled: Being called "lumpen" had cut them to the quick. The humanists were in serious unrest: They had built "humanity" for themselves so beautiful, new, and splendid, so godlike, and now their artwork was so miserably smashed into pieces! They above all sought to defend and rescue their last ideal. It had been in all these years the pride of "criticism," the "critical," the "absolute" criticism, to overcome in restless progress one opposition after

the other; they could not allow it to be said of them that they still remained so far behind. Thus they revolted. But "criticism" had already at that time entered into the stage of self-decomposition. Its strengths were used up and its work, the preparatory work, was done. It died from the blows that Stirner delivered.

It was only natural that the opinions, even among "The Free," were expressed very diversely. The surprise of hearing the quietest of them suddenly speak so loudly and clearly was universal, and even if the closest acquaintances, who had already followed Stirner's first works, knew that it could only be a matter of importance, the others standing farther away were all the more astonished to find in the simple man, whom until then they may have often overlooked, the great and sharp intellect, which spoke out of his book. Thus Stirner and his ideas may in this time have often enough formed the focus of the circle and its conversation. Stirner himself naturally remained wholly indifferent: The outward fame could not make him prouder than he had been inwardly. At any rate he now belonged to the "curiosities" of the circle, and as from now on he was named together with the Bauers and the others, people now also came to Hippel's in order to see "the unique one" and convince themselves that he "in reality was not at all as wicked as he had made himself out to be in his book."

Bruno Bauer, who had already in 1843 run into "disagreement" with Stirner on the occasion of a probably commonly planned edition of a work, felt deeply that Stirner "had gone over and above him," on paths where he was unable to follow. To be sure, he held back his inner resentment and never gave it public expression, just as little as he himself sought to counter Stirner's critique. Their relationship remained outwardly the same friendly one, even if a certain estrangement was observed by many, which now came more to the fore after it had found such an intellectually sharp expression. However it never came to a separation between the two.

The philosophy of Stirner is not a "system" that could found a "school" and through it be elaborated and more strongly based. Although Stirner was a teacher, not a word of his book betrays the philosophical schoolteacher. Each must learn from him what he will and what he is able to learn; he will never be his "disciple" in the narrow sense, and if he wanted to be, the unwilling teacher would reject him himself in his own act of thinking. Young people will certainly—and hopefully forever—let themselves be stimulated and encouraged to independent thinking by Stirner. But the whole benefit of *Der Einzige* will only be granted to the man who has exchanged the illusions of youth for the truths of life.

Curiously, however, Stirner found among his admirers no real followers [Anhänger]. Basically there was no one there who could grasp the real significance of his work in its full extent. Thus it was also evaluated only in this or that direction, but never as a whole, and when it began to be forgotten, there was no one to carry his powerful call unbroken through the coming decades.

It was quickly forgotten. As the year of revolution drew near, all interests turned to the forceful solution of all doubts, and when the noisy rattle of arms had faded away, the voices that just before had called out so vividly had been frightened away. It was quiet and remained quiet for a long time.

The outward success of the work could not be large. It did not go beyond the first, probably no more than one-thousand-copy edition and probably even reached this only little by little in the course of the decades, in which there still were here and there isolated hands that reached for the forgotten book.

This was the reception of Stirner's *Der Einzige* in general; how it turned out with the contemporary criticism and with isolated outstanding contemporaries, of this still more below.

It is the work itself that now above all has to occupy us more thoroughly.

What is it? What does it provide? In what lies its greatness, its importance, its immortality? With a word: In what does its power—"over us"—consist?

To these questions only it and it alone, of course, can give the right answer. Only a fundamental and repeated study of it can bring us closer to it. There is no substitute for this effort—and its benefit.

The inexhaustible riches of the book mock every description. A listing of its contents in a systematic form is impossible, since Stirner, in spite of a fully planned layout of the whole, again and again breaks the path of his exposition himself, reaching ahead and behind always anew to move the objects of his consideration into new light.

He felt and knew it himself. He even says in one place right at the beginning, that he does not think of **"proposing to work by line and level."**

Just as he leaps out before the amazed readers already in the short introduction with the bold proposition—"Here I am!"—after a few pages, when he is still completely occupied in fathoming the men of ancient times, the egoist appears in his whole greatness, and whereas "man" is not yet resolved in his full emptiness as the ghost of the past, the egoist already demands his power, his ownness, and already stands there, even if still in an uncertain form, in his uniqueness.

Again, whereas we believe "man" already conquered, and the "I" develops before us in its strength and splendor, Stirner, like Achilles, drags the corpse of the conquered through the field of his victory, and only at the end of his goal does the embodied victor release the lifeless and bodiless enemy.

Not that Stirner repeated himself. But inexhaustible as nature itself, which ever anew pleases itself with apparent repetitions and whose creations are still never quite the same, his field is as large and wide as hers and finds its borders only on himself.

Yet we must not abandon the attempt to grasp, at least in a large and sketchy outline, the leading thoughts of the work, and so, before we seek to go into the significance of *Der Einzige*, its language and its style, and to evaluate its achievement, we wish to read the book together slowly, page by page, and let our eyes rest briefly on the high points, before we go out again into the valleys and depths of its expanse.

That we will let Stirner speak as much as possible in his own words, requires no mention.

* * *

Everything is to be my concern. **Only *my* cause is never to be my concern. "Shame on the egoists."**

But from God, humanity, and the sultan, who have all set their cause on nothing than themselves, from these great egoists I will learn: **Nothing is more to me than myself.**

Like them, **I have set my affair on nothing!**

*

The work is divided into two large sections: the first is titled "Man"; the second, "I."

*

The restless criticism of that time promoted "man" from the rubble of the past to the highest and final ideal; for one, Feuerbach, he became the highest being; for the other, Bruno Bauer, something just now found. Let us look at the two, the highest being and the new discovery more closely, says Stirner coolly. Man—what was and is he? And what is he to me?

Stirner first briefly surveys the life of a man: a man's life from its beginning to its maturity. He shows the struggle of the child, the realist, to win and assert himself until, at first caught up in the things of this world, he succeeds in going beyond them; the wrestling of the

youth, the idealist, with reason in order to find pure thought—his first self-discovery: the mind and its slow overcoming; finally the victory of the man, the egoist, of his interest over the ideal, who discovers himself bodily in a second self-discovery and becomes owner of his thoughts and the world, by setting himself over everything.

The life story of this single man is transferred to the history of the "forefathers," who pass before us as men of the ancient and the new times in broad pictures: the ancients—the children, the realists, the heathen; the new—the enthusiasts, the idealists, the Christians; and the free, not the men, the egoists, but rather only the newer and newest among the new, and how these are still deeply caught in the prejudices of Christianity.

The essence of the mind comes to life again before us in the concise description of the ancients: the victory of the sophists over the prevailing power at the height of the Periclean century, gained with the weapon of reason; the fight of the moral philosopher Socrates against the sophists for the formation of the heart, which reached its end only on the death day of the ancient world; the wisdom of the stoics and the Romans; the hedonism of the epicureans; the complete break with the world through the skeptics. And the result of the whole gigantic work of the ancients? That man understood himself as spirit. With this, with the world of the spirit, Christianity began and the new man steps into the picture.

Originally separated by the deepest chasm, the ancients themselves built a bridge to the new over the abyss of the innermost difference and from the truth that they sought and found made themselves a lie. But all the same they, the heathens, stood opposite the world of things still forearmed and sought to draw man more and more away from this world order to themselves. They were cheated of this, their greatest victory of world conquest, by the new men. For, to them, the new men, the world is no more, but the spirit—God, the world conqueror—is everything. To go beyond him, as the ancients went beyond the world, is the struggle of the next two centuries: the battle of theology.

Their fight took a path similar to that of the ancients: after a long imprisonment reason raised itself in the pre-Reformation century, and they let the game continue until it finally began in the Reformation with the heart itself, which since then—always becoming "more un-Christian"—is no longer able to love man, but only spirit.

"Now, what is the spirit? It is the creator of a spiritual world!" Coming from nothing it is itself its first creation, as the thinking man creates himself with his first thought, and you make it into the center, just as on the other side the egoist does with himself. **"You live not to *yourself*, but to your *spirit* and to what is the spirit's, *i. e.* ideas."** The spirit is your god.

But I and the spirit lie in an eternal conflict. It lives in the here-after; I on the earth. In vain, to force the heavenly down to this side! For: **"I am neither God nor Man, neither the supreme essence nor my essence."**

After this digression in the founding of the spirit the presentation goes from the new man over to the detailed consideration of those possessed by it.

The spirit is like that spook that no one has seen, but which so countless many times trustworthy witnesses ("the grandmothers") attest to. The whole world that surrounds you is filled with imaginary spooks. The sacredness of truth, which sanctifies you, is basically something alien, not your own. **"Alienness is a criterion of the 'sacred'."** For him, who believes in no supreme being—neither in God, nor in Man—the atheist admirer of man and the Christian worshipper of God are equally pious.

To prove the reality of the spook (the **"existence of God"** in every form), this was for centuries the task that man set himself: the horrible ordeal of the Danaidae to name the incomprehensible in every phenomenon. Thus has man himself become a sinister spook and from every corner pop up hauntingly he himself and his—spirit, i.e., the creation of his spirit.

But in truth it exists only in your head—loose screws tormenting you. It has bored itself into so many heads that almost the whole human world appears to be a large madhouse, in which the insane perform a mad dance around their fixed ideas, while the stupid crowd cheers them on. **"The 'fixed idea', that is the truly sacred"** for them, and their fanaticism persecutes heretics, who do not believe in their moral laws. In place of God they have set morality and lawfulness, and all opposition of the modern age is fruitless, since it does not dare to leave the ground of this "bourgeois morality." Crippled by the curse of half-measures, the Liberals vacillate between their free will and morality.

The victory of morality means nothing other than a change of masters: from the "sacred" mode has come the "human." Moral love does not love this or that man for his own sake, but rather man, for the sake of man, for God's sake.

Self-sacrifice, self-denial, selflessness—all these formal sides of the loose screws in the head show us in a constant fight of our own feelings against what is given to us; instead of letting ourselves be "stimulated," we let ourselves be crammed full of them, and with holy shyness we appear before the barriers of our responsibility.

The hierarchy of the spirit lasts to this day. **"Hierarchy is dominion of thoughts, dominion of mind."**

A brief survey of the field of anthropology opens this last chapter in the dissolution of the mind: The already described times of antiquity, the time of dependence on things, and that of Christianity, the time of dependence on thought, are set in parallel with the epochs of Negroidity and of Mongolidity, of embodied Chineseness. When will both be overcome by the Caucasians, who storm and destroy the heaven of the mind —whose self-discovery will become reality with the mortality of the mind?

For through me, the egoist, will the dissolution of mind into its nothingness be effected!

After a digression on the sacredness of morality and the powerless and humble shyness before it, he describes the hierarchy as dominion of thought and mind, which in their highest despotism mean

simultaneously the triumph of philosophy (**"Philosophy cannot hereafter achieve anything higher"**), and he shows its power, like that of its priests, on the "fixed ideas" of philanthropy in its many misunderstood expressions, as well as on morality in its education to "fear of people's opinion." Truth and doubt in the history of philosophy and religion—thus could the next remarks be designated, if they did not immediately run again into the renewed decompositions of concepts, in which the modern time changes the existing object in spite of its assertion of having brought it to freedom. Protestantism and Catholicism are characterized in their essence: the irresponsibility of the latter, the discipleship of the mind of the former are shown.

Man stands powerless before the invincible, helpless before his destiny.

The wisdom of the world of the ancients seeks to elude that destiny, as does the theology of the moderns, the former by endeavoring to overcome the world, the latter by endeavoring to subjugate the mind.

The first succeeded **"when I had exalted myself to be the *owner of the world*"**: the world had become worldless, the first property gained; the latter—what a long and fruitless struggle up to today! Indeed in two centuries we have **"torn off and trodden under foot many bits of sacredness,"** but the opponent appears again and again in another and newer form. Out of the holy spirit has come the "absolute idea," and the confusion of concepts becomes worse and worse. **"Another step, and the world of the sacred has conquered!"**

How can you make it your own? Consume it! **"Digest the sacramental wafer, and you are rid of it!"**

If the development of the ancients could be set forth in short and clear sections, the consideration of the moderns in their confused and contradictory struggle with the mind requires a much greater space.

It is not the remote wisdom of the world of the ancients, not the God-world of Christianity, but the fight of his own time that calls Stirner to sympathy with "The Free," to whom therefore a special section is also dedicated.

He names them "The Free," because they called themselves that; but he gives it "**only as a translation of 'the liberals'.**" The term liberalism collected at that time everyone who believed he had reached the final limit in the field of radical thinking. It must have appealed above all to Stirner, who from his height saw this field lying in the flatland of Christianity, to show them, his contemporaries, how deeply they were still caught in the fetters of the mind, from which they completely believed they had escaped. He attached his criticism to what was the most progressive criticism of his time. Their victory, which they made a great show of, was for him only a new defeat before the old enemy, and he took up the fight there, where they withdrew from battle. He began where they ended.

The progressive movement of the beginning of the 1840s poured forth into the three forms of political, social, and humanist liberalism. Today one would call its representatives liberals, socialists, and ethicists, and even if the first have nothing more of purposefulness and little more of the courage of the former; the second, with the enormous upswing and growth of the socialist movement, fossilized here to a political party, seek there new shores in an eternally surging tide; and the third, not only among those named but also among so many other names, with hopeless self-satisfaction splashes in the seething waters of the most impossible theories of making humanity happy. Thus they have remained basically entirely the same, and Stirner's criticism strikes them with the same sharpness today as it did then.

Political liberalism is the battlefield of the bourgeoisie, as it developed in the battle against the privileged classes since the French revolution. With the awakening of "human dignity" begins the political epoch in the life of the peoples. The "good citizen" becomes the highest ideal. **"The true man is the nation."** We receive our human rights from the state. State's interest—the highest interest; state's service—the highest honor! "The general interest of all by the general equality of all"—that is the first demand of the state, according to

which everything proceeds. The bourgeoisie seeks an impersonal ruler and finds it in the majority.

It is only from the fact that the subjects must bleed that they notice they are owners; from the prerogatives of the privileged classes come their "rights." **"The bourgeoisie is the aristocracy of desert"**; the **"good disposition"** is their crown of honor. The "servants" of the state are the free: the good citizen enjoys the long-missing "political freedom."

It watches over the "individual freedom"—over the independence from a personal master, for lawfulness is the inalienable power of the state.

The error of a time is always the advantage of some, the harm of the others. In the bourgeois state the capitalist is the prevailing one; his money gives him his worth: the work of his capital and that of the subservient workers.

I have everything through the grace of the state; nothing without its consent. But what is the protection of the state to me, who owns nothing? The protection of the privileged, who exploit me. The worker cannot get the use of the full value of his work. Why? Because the state is based on the slavery of labor. **"If labor becomes free, the State is lost."**

Thus and with a reference to the monstrous power that the worker, still not self-aware, has in his hands, the consideration of the political passes over to that of *social liberalism*.

If the persons in political liberalism have become equal, then it is still not their property. Just as there no one is to give orders anymore, here no one is to "have" anymore. In place of the state enters society. Who is society? All. The "nation" of politicians is the "spirit" of the socialists.

Society is not personified. And yet personal property belongs to it. Before it, the highest owner, we are all—lumpen. We are all there for one another; we therefore labor—all for one, one for all. **"It is labor that constitutes our dignity and our—equality."** We are no

longer Christians and therefore feel our misery; the doctrine of enjoyment of the world, the happiness of the bourgeoisie, fills us with indignation. Down with it during the six workdays of the week; on Sunday we may call one another brother.

Competition, the gamble for goods, disappears. Communism does away with it: Each one is a worker and everything belongs to everyone. In the bourgeoisie goods were made available to all; in communism they are forced upon us.

To show that the acquisition of goods still does not make us men, that is the task that still remains for humanist liberalism.

He may be called "humanist," while he calls himself "critical," because he does not go beyond the principle of liberalism, man, since the critic always remains a liberal. **"Humanus is the saint's name."**

The worker does everything for his welfare; the citizen has declared man only as "free born"—both are users: the ones use society, the others the state, for their egoistic goals and do nothing for mankind.

But only human interest gives me value in the case of the humanist; only my "complete disinterest" makes me a man for him. Denying state and society he still retains both and strives for them in "human society."

Instead of saying: "I am man!"—he seeks for him, man—the embodied seeks for insubstantial ideas.

He despises the pack-mule mentality, the mass work of the workers, and the **"masterlessness of man"** in the consciousness of the citizen; he only knows the human consciousness. He wants the last principle: to see man extended over all.

The whole conflict of the liberals among themselves was until now a conflict for the measure of freedom—for less, for more, for the "whole" freedom, the moderate all the way to the measureless—and thus the discord never came to an open battle.

But the mortal enemy of all am I, the egoist, the inhuman being. I withdraw myself from the state of the bourgeoisie, from the lumpen-society of the worker, from the ideal condition of mankind. The "freedom" of the ones is not my freedom; the welfare of the others is not my welfare; the human right is not my right. In their master-, owner-, and God-lessness rises up the master as the state, the possession as work, and God as man again—new subservience, new cares, new belief! For the goals of liberalism are called: **a "rational order," a "moral behavior," a "limited freedom," not anarchy, lawlessness, selfhood.**

Its gain, however, is nevertheless mine: From criticism I have learned to feel well myself in the dissolution, and **"what Man seems to have gained," *I* alone have gained.**

The judgment of liberalism was concluded, but Stirner's work was not yet published when "criticism" made a further step forwards. This led him to add a postscript to his consideration in order to occupy himself with the latest findings.

The state, even as free state, will be completely given up, since it cannot fulfill the tasks of human society. **"The masses, a spiritual being"**—has become the newest object of critical criticism. It, the boundlessly disgruntled crowd, mystified by the age of Enlightenment, can no longer be satisfied through the assumption of the critics, through man. In spite of his fear of dogma, the critic remains on the same ground as the dogmatists: that of thoughts. Bound to his task, he is incapable of recognizing **"the monstrous significance of unthinking jubilation"** and remains caught in the world of thoughts—in the religious world.

So I will also become a criminal in the realm of thought and with arbitrariness and impudence I will conquer its forms—overthrow the impudent arbitrariness of the state and set myself over it.

Even the last dissolution of criticism, in which the old assumptions of the past can only fall apart, when they are destroyed in it, without at the same time creating new ones, I will use to my advantage.

*

The new discovery of man turned out to be a new God. **"At the entrance of the modern time stands the God-man."** Man killed God, to become the one and only God. **"The *other world outside us* is indeed brushed away; . . . but the *other world in us* has become a new heaven."**

God and man must die in the God-man so that we can live.

Who will stand at the exit to the modern time? is now the question; and the answer, which we already know, is: I.

In possession of my own character, I am the owner of my power, my intercourse, my self-enjoyment, and I am in character when I know myself as the unique one!

What is my ownness? Is it freedom, the doctrine of Christianity, the **"lovely dream,"** the longing of all? No: **"I am free from what I am rid of, owner of what I have in my power."** "Ownness is my whole being and existence, I am it myself." When my freedom becomes my power, only then is it complete. Every other freedom can only be the craving for a particular freedom and will always include the purpose of a new dominion. **"Freedom can only be the whole of freedom; a piece of freedom is not freedom."** Exhaust the demands of freedom as much as you wish. If I am free from everything that I am not, then I alone remain. But I will not only become free from what oppresses me; I will be the owner of my power. **"The *own* man is the *free-born*, the man free to begin with."** "The free man is not just the one who searches for freedom." Only the freedom that you take for yourself can lead to self-liberation. My self-interest, which has me desire a thing for its usefulness leads me into the realm of my ownness, which knows an alien standard as little as it is an idea. For it is **"only a description of the—owner."**

The last consequence of Christianity has been carried out: liberalism has proclaimed the true man, and the Christian religion has been transformed into the human. Thus it has become the religion of the "free state," which protects itself through it against the un-man, the egoist.

In place of God, man has become master, mediator, and spirit; from him, from man, I receive my "rights," he draws for me the limits of my intercourse, he gives me my value. **"The power is Man's, the world is Man's, I am Man's."**

I, however, answer the question: **"Now, who is Man? *I* am!"** The state and I are enemies. I laugh at its demand, to be Man according to its meaning. I, the desecrator, rebel against Man!

My power, which is my property—through which I am my property—gives me property. For I myself am my power.

"Right is the ruling will of society." Every existing right is a given right. I am supposed to honor it in every form in which I find it, and subordinate myself to it. But what is society's right to me, the right "of all"? What do I care about the equality of rights, the conflict of rights? What are inborn rights to me?

Right becomes word in the law. The prevailing will is the preserver of states; my own will (my "self-will") overthrows it. Every state is a despotism: all right and all power are supposed to belong to the totality of the people.

But I do not allow myself to be bound, for I recognize no duty, even though the state may call crimes in my case what it calls "right" in its own case.

My relationship to the state is not the relationship of one I to another I. It is the relationship of the sinner to the saint. The saint, however, is a fixed idea and from it arise the crimes.

"The last and most decided opposition, that of unique against unique, … vanishes in complete—*severance* or singleness."

What now is my right? My right is what is right for me, to whatever I entitle myself. As far as my power goes, so far reaches my right.

"Right is a wheel in the head, put there by a spook; power—that am I myself, I am the powerful one and owner of power."

On my power over the world goes out my intercourse with it.

Stirner dedicates almost a third of his book to this chapter: first, the destruction of those foreign powers that seek in the most diverse forms to suppress and destroy the I; and second, the exposition of the connections of our intercourse among ourselves, how they result from the conflict and the harmony of our interests.

The people—mankind and the family ("**peoplet** in the people") live in dependence on me, the egoist. But their freedom is not my freedom; the public welfare is not my welfare. They can fulfill only human demands, not those of my interest. But the people are not sacred to me. **"Everything sacred is a tie, a fetter."** I, the individual, think only of what I can use. **"The fall of peoples and mankind will invite me to my rise."**

The Christian people have brought forth two societies: the state and the church. They build a society and they promote the community. What is the community of the family other than the narrow prison in the wider one? The state is the enlarged family. But **"I am free in no State."** Not the free activity of the individual is its goal; it recognizes only machine-work.

The believer in the state is the true politician; his circle of vision is enclosed in his party. He, the **"good citizen,"** embodies the **"devoted mind for legality,"** and willingly submits to its punishments. But as, e.g., the church punishment has fallen, so must all punishments fall.

Whoever does not serve the family, the party, the nation, he still **"lives for and serves *mankind.*" "People is the name of the body, State of the spirit, of that ruling person that has hitherto oppressed me."**

"I am owner of humanity, am humanity, and do nothing for the good of another humanity."

The property of humanity is mine. I do not respect its property.

Poverty arises from the fact that I cannot realize my value as I wish. It is the state that hinders me from entering into a direct relationship with the others. **Private property lives by grace of the *law*;**

I am allowed to compete only within its prescribed limits; I am allowed to use only the money that he prescribes for me as means of exchange. The forms of the state may change, but its intention always remains the same.

My property is that **"to which I—*empower* myself." "Let might decide about property—I will expect everything from my might!"**

You do not lure me with love; you do not catch me with the promise of community of goods. The question of property will only be solved through the war of all against all. And **"what a slave will do as soon as he has broken his fetters, one must—await!"**

Why talk of freedom of competition, you civic-minded people, so long as for me the reason for competition is lacking? Stay away from my body, you benefactors of the people, with your distribution! I take for myself what I need, and I need as much as lies in the realm of my power.

So too my word is my own, and where the press permission is missing, I take the "freedom of the press" for myself. The press is then my property, if I feel myself not responsible to those over there who want to give to me or take from me the freedom of the press.

I recognize no "law of love." Like every one of my feelings, it is my property. I give it, I make a gift of it, I lavish it, because it makes me happy. Acquire it, if you believe you have a right to it. I do not let the measure of my feelings be prescribed nor the goals of my feelings be determined. We and the world have only one relationship to one another: that of usefulness. **"Yes, I utilize the world and men!"**

I will not deceive a confidence that I have voluntarily called forth; but I ask whether **"I give the confider the right to confidence." If you have wanted to bind me, then learn that I know how to burst your bonds.** In and of itself the oath is as little sacred as the lie is contemptible.

Society is our state of nature. But the dissolution of *society* is *intercourse* or *union*.

It is a matter of whether **"my liberty or my ownness is limited by a society."** The diminishment of the first offends me somewhat; **but ownness I will not have taken from me.**

From the community of men arises the laws of society. Communism is commonality in equality. "But I would rather be referred to men's selfishness than to their compassion."

I aspire not to commonality, but to one-sidedness. In a union [Verein] you can make yourself prevail; in society you are used. You or society, owner or lumpen, egoist or socialist!

Over the portal of our time stands: **"Get the value out of thyself!"**

Direct yourself against the institutions that endanger your ownness; not revolution, but rebellion!

I have no duty toward others, I humble myself no longer before any power.

For the moral and humane their demands regarding the world remain *pia desideria* [pious desires]; my intercourse with it, however, consists in enjoying it. I use it for—my self-enjoyment.

The world up to now was concerned for its life; we seek the enjoyment of life. What an enormous gap: to seek myself, and to have and enjoy myself!

Centuries of longing and hoping lie behind us; before us lies enjoyment.

The brutality of the first human offerings has become the self-offering of life for the sake of a task, a profession. Therefore our life no longer belongs too us, and suicide is a crime against morality. Humanity is the calling of the liberal.

But man has no calling, he has only strengths, which express themselves, and **"what one can become he does become."** For his strengths express themselves automatically, and to use his force is not man's calling and task, but is his **"act, real and extant at all times."**

Men are as they should be and can be, and the clever take them just as they are, instead of how they should be.

So long as the time of the parsons and schoolmasters of the world lasts, so long does thinking against egoism prevail. **"History hitherto is the history of the *intellectual* man."** The centuries have trained him for culture. I make use of their experience. But—**"I want still more."**

"What a man is, he makes out of things." Either I lose myself in the creation of my will (my judgment), or I remain the creator (who always judges anew).

Free thinking is not my thinking. Free thinking guides me; but I guide my own thinking. Free sensuality consumes me; my own sensuality I satisfy at my pleasure.

What can freedom of thought be to me? An empty word. Thoughts, yours and mine, are to me creations.

Speech is the greatest tyrant: it is the leader of that army of "fixed ideas," which crusades against us. Speech, like thought, must become your property.

What are truths? For believers they are utter facts. **"Truths are phrases, ways of speaking, words; brought into connection, or into an articulate series, they form logic, science, philosophy."** As long as the rule of thoughts lasts, as long as the hierarchy, the parsons (in every form), do the talking, as long as one still believes in principles—then so long will they criticize. For the secret of criticism is always a kind of "truth."

My criticism is not useful, but rather is just my own criticism. For my thinking is without a "presupposition": **"Before my thinking, there is—I."** Therefore thinking the presupposition itself is posited. It is what I am for my thinking, and I am thus the owner of thought; thinking is my property.

I am the measure of everything, not man. Truth does not have value in itself, but in me. For itself, it is worthless and, like thought, a creation. **"All truths *beneath* me are to my liking."** I am not acquainted with a truth above me. **"That is true which is mine, untrue that whose own I am; true, *e. g.* the union; untrue, the State and society."**

And so it is with idea. Its reality **"consists in the fact that I, the bodily, have it." Criticism smites one idea only by another.**

At the beginning as at the end of Christianity the war against egoism is in force. **"I am not to make myself (the individual) count, but the idea, the general."** War must have its rage removed.

We all unconsciously strive for ownness. But an unconscious act is a half-way act and again and again you fall as servants into the hands of a new faith.

I watch the battle with a smile, however. Owner of all, "I let my humor play with the great thoughts, the sublime feelings, the sacred faith."

For I know that **we are perfect altogether! The world swarms with fools who seem to themselves to be sinners.** But the sinners live only from the dreams of their sick imagination; the healthy eye has never seen a sinner. **"You, who fancy that you love men, are the very one to throw them into the mire of sin."**

But I do not let my self-enjoyment be spoiled: just as I no longer serve a higher being, so too I no longer serve any man, but myself alone. Thus **"I am not merely in fact or in being, but also for my consciousness, the—unique."**

For I am no I beside another I. Everything about me is unique, and only as this I do I act and develop myself, make everything my own.

That is my intercourse with the world!

The last, few pages of the book still belong to the unique one. Once again the pre-Christian and Christian period are summarized in their goals—sanctity and corporeity—once again the irreconcilable opposition between the real and the ideal is emphasized, once again it is shown how both on opposite paths still come out on the one, the divine, which at the end of the cycle of Christian views is called "man"—"man" as the I of world history concludes the cycle. With the tension between existence and calling their spell is broken.

For the individual is a world history for himself; he knows no calling; he lives unconcerned about the weal and woe of mankind.

No name rightly designates me; no concept expresses me; I am perfect.

"I am *owner* of my might, and I am so when I know myself as *unique*." Everything that is over me, God or Man, vanishes before this consciousness. On myself, the unique, the **"transitory, mortal creator, who consumes himself,"** I set my concern.

Thus the book concludes.

And once more, as at the beginning, the blissful laugh of the unique one exults: **"All things are nothing to me!"**

["Ich hab' mein Sach auf Nichts gestellt," the first line of Goethe's poem "Vanitas! Vanitatum Vanitas!" Literal translation: "I have set my affair on nothing."]

Thus Max Stirner speaks to us.

How do we answer him?

The attempt to evaluate his work can hardly turn out better than by repeating his words; yet we must undertake to indicate at least what makes this book so incomparable.

The significance of *Der Einzige* is today as it was seventy years ago more suspected and felt than recognized. How could it be otherwise in times when indeed everything that we had held onto up to then was tottering, when we were indeed making a sincere effort to put new values in places of the old, when the old, stale wine was again and again poured into new bottles, instead of being thrown out, and when we were indeed still so little convinced of the complete worthlessness of most values.

The human race is between night and day. Half awake, we rub our still sleep-heavy eyes and yet do not dare to look into the light.

We are unable to separate ourselves from the old dwellings of our concepts, though they collapse over our heads; we are too cowardly to leave the old home country and trust ourselves to the sea of self-consciousness, which alone can carry us to the other shore; we don't yet have a genuine trust in the future, although, or rather, because we no longer have any trust in ourselves.

We no longer believe in God, certainly not. We have become atheists, but have remained "pious people." We no longer pray before the bogeyman of the Church; we kneel before the sanctuaries of our interior selves.

We intoxicate ourselves as before, and our misery on awakening is the same. Only we awake oftener, and our condition is a staggering between drunkenness and doubt, no longer the holy, eternal intoxication of the first, "true" Christians.

Then this man comes among us.

He does not appear with the condescension of the priest: he does not stand in the service of God, nor in that of any idea; not with the bustle of the teacher—he leaves it to us to believe or to reject what he says; not with the care of the doctor—he lets us live and die—for he knows that our illusion is our sickness. He does not come as the philosopher who seeks to snare us in the net of a new system of speculation; he spurns the philosopher's language, that ugly, dark, and unintelligible language, which all those use who wish to talk only among themselves; he creates for himself his own language, for he knows that all knowledge can also be understandable, if it wants to be understandable.

He does not speak of us; he hardly speaks to us.

He speaks of himself and only of himself, and we see how this, his I, removes one fetter after another, until free of the very last one it stands in proud self-mastery as its own sovereign, unconquerable, on that place which it has finally conquered.

It is no more and no less than the declaration of sovereignty of the individual, his incomparability and his uniqueness, that Stirner announces. Until now it was only his rights and his duties, and where they both begin and end, that were spoken of; but he pronounces himself free of the latter and in command of the former. We have to decide for ourselves. And since we cannot go back into the night, we must go into the day.

For we now know that we are all egoists. When we view our deeds, we see that some have already led us farther, much farther than our consciousness is yet willing to admit, whereas the others have involved us in the most insoluble conflicts. It would be in vain for us to seek further to deceive ourselves and the others about the grounds of our actions. Now that we have recognized them, what is left for us than to direct ourselves accordingly?

Success will teach us what we have to thank Stirner for, if the example of those who have already so lived their lives has not yet shown us.

It is our final knowledge. Let us no longer resist it. For truly the day is coming not too early after a too long night!

He has raised bent necks and pressed a sword into the paralyzed hand: he has taken faith from us and given us certainty.

He has again reminded us of our true interests, of our worldly, personal, own, special interests, and shown us how following them, instead of sacrificing ourselves to the ideal, sacred, foreign interests—the interests of all—brings back the happiness of life which we appear to have lost.

By analyzing the state of the politicians, the society of the socialists, the humanity of the humanists and bringing them to consciousness as the barriers of our ownness, he has given the death thrust to authority—broken with the will to power of the majority, the totality, and its privilege—and in place of the citizen, the worker, the man, enters the I, in place of the intellectual destroyer, the embodied creator!

But not only that: by dedicating the other part of his work to a very thorough investigation of the conditions under which this I alone is in a position to develop to its uniqueness, he shows it in its power, its intercourse, its self-enjoyment—the means of its strength and its final victory.

And in place of our tired, tortured, self-martyring race enters that proud, free one of *Der Einzige*—to which the future belongs.

He did what he did for himself, because it gave him pleasure.

He asks for no thanks, and we owe him none.

He has only reminded us of our offences against ourselves!

That is what he has done; how he did it is no less admirable.

If naturalness and strength are the marks of true genius, then Max Stirner was doubtless a genius of the first rank. He sees the world and its people entirely with his own eyes and everything stands there before him in the sharp light of reality. Nothing can disturb or deceive his view: not the night of the past, not the crush of desires of his own time. His is a completely original work, and none would have been written with greater objectiveness and lack of prejudice than this book: *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum*. There is nothing, but nothing, which Stirner assumes as firm and given, unless it is his own I. Nothing baffles or confuses him, from the start nothing "impresses" him. Thus he appears the true child of that critical time, so infinitely ahead of it that he begins where the others leave off. This objectiveness gives his words that self-evident certainty that has such a baffling effect on some, and such a victorious one on others.

The logic of the thinker is incomparable. The rigid logical consistency of his conclusions does not recoil from any consequence. He does not allow the reader to take his thoughts to the end of their area; he does it himself. Concepts that up to now appeared unassailable are resolved by him one after the other and he lets them collapse. He tracks down the meaning of words until he grasps the right ones, which are often in complete contradiction to that which was given to them up to that time. He strips the great ones of their pomp and shows them in their emptiness; and he brings the disdained ones, condemned by speech usage, again to honor. He teaches us for the first time their true usage.

Up to now not a single internal contradiction in him could be demonstrated; the future will have nothing else to do than extend further what he has established for all time. New prospects will open up in abundance, but he has ended the argument.

In his godlike unconcern and his ruthless logic his work appears completely that of a man who did it, as one of the sharpest thinkers of our day says of the unique one, "not to please others, but in the first place to please the creator himself." Since Stirner was unable to live according to his will, his aversion was awakened and he created the work of his life, over which he poured the whole freedom of his being, while around him all were tiring themselves in raging outcry and intolerant fanaticism.

For calmness, self-mastery, superiority, cheerfulness, irony, and magnanimity are always the best marks of the truly free, just as haste, uncertainty, indignation, emotionalism, self-opinionated stubbornness, and narrow-minded pettiness are marks of the power-hungry.

A springtime-fresh pleasure in battle wafts through this book from the first to the last page. To be the evenly matched opponent of his opponent, to have a bodily enemy opposite him, whom he can look in the eye and seize, who "himself full of courage, his own courage" inflames, to stand man against man in battle, that is what Stirner wishes for himself! [Mackay paraphrases here part of Stirner's quotation from Schiller, *Wallenstein's Tod*, Act 1, Scene 4. See note on page 178.]

But also there where the enemy shyly withdraws from him, where instead of him the ghosts of madness and illusion, the shadows of the past, pop up, he pursues the fugitives to the farthest hiding place and does not rest until he has brought them into the light of day and uncovered them as the ghostly phantoms of our obsession.

Trumpery and filth—he brushes them both away: the former does not beguile him nor the latter disgust him; and the trumpery of the intellectual and the filth of the riffraff disappear before the consciousness of his uniqueness.

His courage is incomparable and he does not shrink back from any opponent. He recognizes no authority over himself. For nothing is sacred to him. He is more than the mocker and more than the critic. He is the great laugher. And his laughing is called liberation.

This courage is always the same. The old concepts, apparently rooted in the ground of the centuries and firm for the "eternity of the

race of man"—these he immediately attacks courageously, like the newly emerging slogans of his time, which he treats as the "ideals of the future," of a new time, and both, the old and the new, are decay and chaff when he touches them.

All that he attacks fight under one flag, one sign, one faith. But he fights quite alone and he stands and falls with his I—the most shining example for the truth of Ibsen's words: "The strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone" [from *An Enemy of the People*, translation by Farquharson Sharp].

But as great as his courage is his foresight. He knows that the fettered hand cannot fight and the paralyzed tongue cannot talk. He does not deliver himself into the hands of the enemy. He knows the foolish stupidity of the ruling power, which in its godlike omnipotence hunts the flies whose buzzing disturbs its sleep and is not aware of the fox that slips into the castle. Stirner knows, he only needs to say "Prussia" and his life's deed is destroyed; he says "China and Japan," and every child knows what he means. Even the Danish classes and the neighboring "autocrat of all the Russians" he names only with . . . . .; and once he speaks of a "certain" state. Certainly it is a childish game; but the power is blind, and he laughs at it. Only when he believes the grabbing hands might indeed reach him, does he drop the game and expressly defend himself against a criminal accusation: he chose the word "indignation" [Empörung] only because of its etymological meaning, and did not use it in the "limited" meaning "frowned upon by the criminal law."

The armor of the thinker is impeccable. He brings to the solution of his task a knowledge that never lets him down. Tirelessly he takes examples that he needs from the history of the past. The Bible, on which he was obviously a most thorough expert, always offers him anew the necessary instances. That wonderful exposition of the men of the old and the new time alone would give witness to how deeply he has grasped the history of the human race in its inner connections, if almost every page of his book did not speak of it.

Stirner was said to have read little—in contrast to Bruno Bauer. This appears doubtful, when we look over the relatively large number of works of his time that he brings in so as to exercise his criticism on their ideas. For not only the most important publications of his time, those of Feuerbach and Bauer, not only Proudhon's first writings, which offer him so many targets, but also the fleeting publications of the time, completely forgotten today, are quoted. These quotations, however, are never written down from memory, but are constantly given and verified in the most careful way with the very words of their authors.

Not only past and present history, but also daily life offers him repeated occasion to reach into its colorful richness, so as to prove the infallibility of his assertions in everyday, but often all the more convincing examples.

Meanwhile, it is not the richness of his knowledge, the care with which he applies it, and his intellect, but rather what is not learnable and is possible only for the genius—to grasp the picture of the world of men with the instinct of intuition in such a way that the important is separated from the unimportant—this is what makes Max Stirner and his work so unique. Just as he is able with a few strokes to give the outlines of a unique human life, so that it stands there tangibly in its whole development from child to man, so too he shows in the flood of the great currents of mankind over the earth the path of ideas through the centuries and their coming and going; what drives them and on what they are wrecked first become understandable through him. Chaotic masses gain form under his shaping hand, so that we recognize them in their true form.

With the same sureness as through the fog of the past, he leads us through the breakers of our own battle-tossed time. For neither the distant nor the near confuses his view, and tirelessly he leads us through the jungle of all errors, until we tread the sure ground of the future with the high and proud figure of its owner.

The language and style of Stirner's book—"the laborious work of the best years of his life"— are as completely original as his thinking. He himself once called it "the partly clumsy expression of what he wanted." He said of himself that "he had to struggle very much with a language that had been spoiled by philosophers, misused by State-, religion-, and other believers, and made capable of a boundless confusion of concepts." His language is nevertheless of a great charm. It is not soft and pliable, for it will not lure and lead astray; it is not dark and difficult, for it will not baffle and intimidate. It is more than anything this: in its crystalline clarity it is honest, living, and capable of every expression. It knows no empty phrase, no contradiction, and no half-measure. It never contents itself with hints, and in everything that it says, it goes for the goal until it reaches it.

It has been said that Stirner's style is tiresome through its repetitions. In truth Stirner never repeats himself. By approaching the object of his examination in a testing way always anew, he never abandons it before he had seen it from all sides and fathomed it, and the many-sidedness in which his unerring view sees things and men is truly astonishing. Quite apart from the fact that truths can never be repeated often enough, the great value of his work lies precisely in meeting all objections, in taking into consideration all the various attacks on the sovereignty of the I. Where it appears necessary to him, he himself reveals the etymological root of the concept to be fathomed (e.g., State, society, etc.). He has an extraordinary love of tracking down the meaning of a word and often exposes its ambiguity by the highly witty way that he uses it, a way that often makes a translation of his sentences into another language appear as an impossibility. He further prefers the sharp confrontation of opposites so as to prove their complete irreconcilability, and all who use half-measures or euphemisms—the worst enemies of every progress—will therefore now as before accuse him of "extremeness."

Since they could not accuse his sharp, precise, unambiguous style of any slipperiness, they said it was cold.

The accusation falls back on those who raise it: those who can warm themselves only on the artificial fire of enthusiasm, never on the pure flame of life itself. For as an immeasurable wrath blazes from the depths of this book, so does the warmth of life glow through its language. It is true that it becomes at times ponderous and broad and only after repeated attempts does it cope with what it undertakes to overcome, but it is not Stirner's fault that it has to work its way through the jungle of someone else's muddled concepts and arid abstractions, through the dialectic of the Hegelians and the jargon of the liberalism of those days. How it breathes with relief when it again becomes entirely the expression of its master's own thoughts, with what lightness it then follows them—from superior mockery all the way to caustic scorn, from merry laughter to the bitterest seriousness! It does not needlessly make the force of its thoughts more difficult, and only seldom does it rise to sublime emotionalism. But where it becomes passionate, it grips all the more powerfully and creates descriptions worthy of an artist of the first rank, to which along with those of an innocence pining away in unrequited longing, those lines also belong that Stirner wrote, while the bells began to ring in his ear, which rang in **"the festival of the thousand years' existence of our dear Germany."** This book is supposed to be cold? What disdain speaks from the damning of **"the true seducers"** of youth, of those who **"busily sow broadcast the tares of self-contempt and reverence to God, who fill young hearts with mud and young heads with stupidity"**! And what bitterness, what iron pride from the description of the great madhouse of the world and the insane behavior of its inmates, their lust for revenge, their cowardice?

This language, so richly moving and of such an inexhaustible supply of expression, is still of transparent clarity. It makes the reading of this unique book possible to everyone who knows how to think. For this reason alone the professional philosophers reject it. But that is completely immaterial. When science becomes free, as the art that it wants to be is today, then will Max Stirner also take the place that is

due him. In the meantime his book will have gone through thousands and thousands of hands, scattering the seeds of his thoughts over the earth.

It is not a book that can be read in one sitting. It is also not a book that one may only leaf through. It will be picked up again and again, to be put down again and again, so that the aroused thoughts may calm down, the indignant feelings become clear. By every new approach its impression will have a more lasting effect on us and its charm a more intensive one. Thus it will accompany us through life, and as we are never able to live the latter to the end, so we will never be able to entirely exhaust the former.

For this book is life itself.

The exponents of "criticism" stood at a loss in the face of the work.

They probably felt that they could not avoid occupying themselves with a publication that moved emotions in such various ways. But in part they withdrew from their duty, in part they sought to discharge it. The reasons are close at hand—in their impotence.

Therefore the number of reviews that are detailed and can be taken seriously is relatively very small; yet it is of course too large to be able to go more closely into even a single one here, even if it deserved it.

A short, even if naturally not complete overview is necessary in order to clarify to some extent the picture given above of its general reception.

The most important reviews were doubtless those that Stirner himself held to be such, in that he himself answered them; they will therefore be given right away the interest that they may claim.

First, in regard to the large daily newspapers—as far as they could be looked through in this connection—they were completely silent about the book. They had more important things to do than to give their attention to an important publication that would have demanded space that indeed was much better—and easier—to fill with

some kind of gossip or the discussion of an interest of the day. The time of the *Hallisches Jahrbuch* and the *Deutsches Jahrbuch* had passed, and what was important and serious was more and more crowded into the ever narrowing space of the feuilletons.

The journals and reviews acted less negatively. The *Blätter für litterarische Unterhaltung* of 1846, which for that matter reviewed everything, sought in a long article to get to the bottom of "the unique one" ["der Einzige"]. For them he is the "excess of a dying school philosophy"; his concept of the intellectual is thoroughly false and materialistic; he is "the solitary prophet," and nowhere is the dissolution of Hegelianism in its textbook form reflected better and more clearly than here.

Die Grenzboten in Leipzig occupied itself repeatedly with Stirner. The first time was in a review that was written right after the publication of his book. Its author, a certain W. Friedensburg, was of the opinion that the "very latest theory admits hardly any other interest in the human being than that of the most thoughtless blasé attitude, such as has just found expression in today's ballet." But he will indeed take care not to occupy himself with the Stirner work more seriously than he has already done. "Who will guarantee me, then, that this I is not amusing himself with me and is not having a mocking laugh at the fool who takes the traditional to be the utterly serious side of the sense of truth!"

A couple of years later *Der Einzige* was called a dithyrambically carried out deep sigh of a beautiful soul, who is bored with the monotony of Philistine life, of history, and of working for a goal! Earlier, though, a future was still prophesized for this "beautiful soul," and the hope was expressed that Stirner would "return to the old banner after his unsuccessful rebellion against liberalism." As if he would have ever acknowledged that banner!

From the theological side Hengstenberg answered in his well-known *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* at the end of 1846. It happened on the publication of the book *Das Verstandesthum und das Individuum* [Rationality and the individual; published anonymously by Karl Schmidt]. Stirner was viewed as finished, his book only touched on.

Many times there was talk of *Der Einzige* in *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* and its sequel *Die Epigonen*, apart from the articles that Stirner himself replied to and of which more will be said below. In the third volume of the first-named journal a section "Feuerbach und der Einzige" of the article "Charakteristik Ludwig Feuerbachs" by an anonymous author is dedicated to "the matched opponent"; in the fourth volume of *Die Epigonen* there is an article, "Auflösung des Einzigen durch den Menschen" [Dissolution of the unique one through man], from the pen of Bettina von Arnim.

Only the detailed review in the *Revue des deux Mondes* of 1847 should remain unforgotten. It is entitled "De la crise actuelle de la Philosophie Hégélienne. Les parties extrêmes en Allemagne," and its author is the knowledgeable expert on German relations M. Saint-René Taillandier. It is dedicated to Ruge and Stirner jointly. Its author is rightly of the opinion that the translation of the title must not be "L'individu et sa propriété," but rather "L'unique et sa propriété." He places himself entirely on Stirner's side and we repeat some passages of his remarkable work in the German translation of [Hermann] Jellinek, who along with [Alfred Julius] Becher was executed [by firing squad] before the Neutor in Vienna: "Just see what sharpness, what indestructible sureness in Max Stirner! Nothing shakes him in his powerful combining of ideas. Fortunate man! He has no scruples, no hesitation, no remorse. Never has a dialectician been better defended by the dryness of his nature. His pen does not tremble; it is elegant without affectation, graceful without bias. There where another would be agitated, he smiles naturally. Atheism is suspect for him as still too religious; to supplement atheism by egoism, that is the task he fulfills, and with what ease, with what calmness of soul!" [« Heureux homme ! il n'a point de scrupules, point d'hésitation, nul remords. Jamais dialecticien n'a été mieux défendu par la sécheresse de sa nature. Sa plume même ne tremble pas; elle est élégante sans affectation, gracieuse sans parti pris. Là où un autre serait agité, il sourit naturellement. L'athéisme lui est suspect, comme trop religieux encore: compléter l'athéisme par l'égoïsme, voilà la tâche qu'il remplit, et avec quelle aisance, avec quelle tranquillité d'âme ! », p. 259]. And further: "That a pen was found which wrote such things, which

wrote them so cold-bloodedly, with such correct elegance, is an incomprehensible secret. One must have read the book himself to be convinced that it exists." And: "How is one to make this enthusiasm about nothing comprehensible to a French reader?"

The Frenchman then evaluates the work in detail in his fashion, and it comes out in the course of the investigation that he is not at all so completely on the side of Stirner as had appeared in the beginning: he hurls words against this "stupid obsession to renounce himself" that are just as passionate as those he earlier used in his evaluation. But it is remarkable that it was a foreigner who found the first and almost the only word of warm admiration for the work and sought to be fair about its boldness and greatness.

The number of independent articles that dealt with *Der Einzige* was extraordinarily small: the privileged philosophy and its publications naturally kept dead silence on the whole movement. But it was mentioned in almost every consideration of the "critical" philosophy of those years.

Whoever comes across an article about the "post-Hegelians" may be sure to find Stirner named after Strauss, Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer, sometimes dismissed with a scornful word, much more rarely with a serious effort to be fair to him, as in the sixth volume of Brockhaus' *Die Gegenwart* of 1851 in an anonymous article "Die deutsche Philosophie seit Hegels Tode" [German philosophy since the death of Hegel]. There, behind all his victims, they boxed in the great destroyer, happy to have found a place for this unbridled spirit. Stirner still stands in this corner today—with "his writing, which can be counted as the most extreme that the philosophical radicalism of that time brought forth in bold and ingenious negation," as in truly remarkable, literal agreement the thoroughly all-knowing men of our great encyclopedias announce, copying one another.

The direct victims in part kept silent, in part they sought to defend themselves. From the side of "Criticism" this happened through the mouth of Szeliga, whom Stirner answered, whereas Bruno Bauer himself never even named Stirner in his writings (for that matter Bauer already turned in those years from the "sovereign, absolute"

criticism to his historical research).—We shall soon see how Feuerbach positioned himself.—The Socialists and Communists condescended to no detailed reply. To be sure, Marx and Engels undertook one immediately, but the manuscript of their work "against the branches of the Hegelian school" only saw the light "so far as the mice have not eaten it" some sixty years later, in 1903. It is tastefully entitled "Saint Max" and is surely the most extremely silly and empty wordplay that the dialectical fights of that time produced. It is readable only for him who brings enough interest and understanding to find enjoyable this last polemic of purely historical value. Even its later publisher no longer stood up for it, as he really should have. How Stirner finished with the jargon of the post-Hegelian school, and how difficult it was for him according to his own admission, we know. But while he changed it into the very language of life, Marx and his echo remained stuck in it and then led it over into those abstractions that still today—unfortunately for unliberated labor—rule their party and let it stagnate in the old, rigid forms. The work—on which incidentally Moses Hess, an old opponent of Stirner, also took part—shows at any rate how much value Marx must have attached to the work of Stirner, when he dedicated to it a reply almost as extensive as *Der Einzige* itself.

Ruge was easily influenced: after the publication of *Der Einzige*, as his correspondence proves, he went from the warmest recognition of Stirner ("the first readable philosophical book in Germany," "one must support and propagate it") to enthusiasm for the criticism of his most hated opponent, Kuno Fischer. He sought to argue with him in his *Zwei Jahre in Paris* [Two years in Paris], in which he granted considerable space to Stirner's book, the bold "wake-up call in the camp of the sleeping theoreticians," in his consideration of "our last ten years" ("Der Egoismus und die Praxis: Ich und die Welt" [Egoism and experience: I and the world]).

In the history of philosophy—the international as well as the German—there will be room for Stirner's work, even if by no means

always, and of course neither in the place due it—as the beginning of a new era—nor in the space befitting it—as a new kind of way of thinking, which does not tend from the concepts to the subject, to subjugate it, but starting from the latter seizes the object, to make it subordinate. Yes, in the history of philosophy, in the history of the intellectual life of our century, Stirner will reluctantly be granted a small place.

For all history writing is today hardly more than a description of the success that is mirrored in the eyes of the majority of people.

However further entering into the position of that criticism, as it developed after and out of the contemporary criticism described, would lead us far beyond the borders of our work.

Stirner himself twice answered the critics of his work. These replies of Stirner, which are of the highest interest and greatest importance, are at the same time the last expressions of his view of life and (with one exception) his last known contributions for journals altogether.

The first reply opposes the three most significant and important reviews that were given *Der Einzige* in the year 1845. They came from three sides that had been attacked by Stirner in the sharpest way: from the socialist side Moses Hess, the communist, answered; criticism gave its answer through Szeliga; the third that condescended to an answer was none other than Feuerbach himself. These criticisms were probably altogether the most notable that Stirner was granted. His choice with regard to these three came as a matter of course and was the occasion for him once more to carry out his destructive thrusts toward all sides. The second reply of Stirner followed much later and was directed against the review of a young man who had ventured to tackle his work in an unheard-of pretentious fashion and audacity, whose schoolboy work would be snatched from oblivion only through Stirner's answer.

Stirner's first reply to the criticism of *Der Einzige* is found on almost fifty pages of the third volume of the *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* of the year 1845. Its title is "Recensenten Stirners" [Reviewers of Stirner], and the initials "M. St." as signature leave no doubt about the author.

The criticism of Szeliga, "Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum," was published in the March issue of the *Norddeutsche Blätter*, published by the Bauers, Fränkel, L. Köppen, and Szeliga himself as "Beiträge zum Feldzuge der Kritik" [Contributions to the campaign of criticism]. Szeliga (his real name was different) was a young officer, "a military figure, exact in thinking and speech, aggressive, with a soldierly inclination to criticism, not in the least revolutionary or oppositional, with a practical-narrow circle of vision. He asked only one thing of philosophy, that it free him from all bourgeois considerations." He did not frequent "The Free" at Hippel's, probably because of his position, but belonged to the Bauers' circle in Charlottenburg and was counted as one of the "Holy Family," and had debuted in the Bauers' literary journal with a long-winded, already mentioned criticism of *Les Mystères de Paris*. The industrious occupation of his leisure hours with philosophical questions of the day brought about still more brochures, e.g., *Die Universalreform und der Egoismus* [Universal Reform and Egoism]. His criticism of Stirner's work, about which he had already given a lecture to a narrow circle, is extraordinarily detailed. It is the Bauer school critic, who brandishes his weapon here. "*Der Einzige*," he says, "provides the opportunity for a new work of self-completion to criticism," to which it is so little a matter of the overthrow of the one as of the raising of the other. After an exact examination of the "life course of the unique one," he is declared to be the "spook of all spooks," and the position of criticism to this spook is treated in a long-winded way. As in the case of this one, so also in the following reviews the examination of Stirner's replies gives occasion to go into their most important points, which were recognized as such and refuted by Stirner himself.

The second important criticism of *Der Einzige* came from the socialist side through Moses Hess in the form of a brochure of twenty-

eight pages published in Darmstadt, entitled *Die letzten Philosophen* [The last philosophers]. Hess was one of the most active fighters in the then still young movement of socialism. Like Stirner, he was an earlier collaborator of the *Rheinische Zeitung.* A through and through communist, he contributed articles to Herwegh's journal *Einundzwanzig Bogen aus der Schweiz* and in 1845 held up a mirror precisely to capitalism in his journal *Gesellschaftsspiegel*, "notoriously the center of the socialist movement in the Rhineland at that time." The "last philosophers" are for him Bruno Bauer and Stirner, the "solitary" and the "unique"; yet he directs his criticism almost exclusively against the latter. He begins his introduction with the suspicion that "one could be of the opinion that in recent times the writings published by the German philosophers were instigated by the reaction," a suspicion that since then has been tastelessly repeated by the socialists against every liberal thinker. He does take the sting out of it right away by explaining that neither Bruno Bauer nor Stirner ever let themselves be determined "from the outside." But since, in his opinion, "the inner development of this philosophy, which is withdrawn from life, had to turn into this 'nonsense'," he lets the accusation of the inner reaction stand, convinced of also gaining with it the success in the eyes of the masses that he intended.

After he has then given a glance at the dualism of the Christian philosophy, the "conflict between theory and praxis," he finds in the Christian State of that philosophy the modern Christian Church, Heaven in this world. In the State's citizens, on the other hand, he finds not true men, but only their spirits. For the bodies of these spirits are in bourgeois society. Germany has still not arrived at this modern, free State, which has again brought to an end the contrast between the individual and the race, but its latest philosophers have arrived at the theoretical reality of this modern church and their contradictions with one another touch only on the relation of the State to bourgeois society. Thus Hess comes to the consequent theoreticians of the philosophical school.

He reproaches Bauer that his criticism is nothing other than that of the high State police, to keep the riffraff in check; he will have a

quite special word with Stirner himself. Of what kind and how trivial his objections against the latter are, we shall see from Stirner's reply.

The third in the compulsory alliance is Ludwig Feuerbach himself. He published his short reply to Stirner, "Über das 'Wesen des Christenthums' in Bezug auf den 'Einzigen und sein Eigenthum'" [On *The essence of Christianity* with reference to *The unique one and his property*], in the second volume of *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift* of 1845 and put it soon afterwards unchanged in the first volume of his *Sämmtliche Werke* [Collected works], the *Erläuterungen und Ergänzungen zum Wesen des Christenthums* [Comments and additions to *The essence of Christianity*], where he accompanied it with the footnote: that here as elsewhere he only has his writing as a writing in view, to which he himself stands in a highly critical relation, and that he has to do only with its subject, nature, and spirit, while he leaves the occupation with its alphabetical letters to the children of God or of the Devil.

This answer of Feuerbach must have interested Stirner—and must interest us—more than all the other criticisms. In it the recluse of Bruckberg sought to ward off the thick-as-hail blows of Stirner that had fallen precisely on him, but unfortunately it is only very brief, aphoristically written, and compressed into a few pages.

Feuerbach had been full of the highest admiration for the work of his opponent and clearly expressed it. He became acquainted with it almost immediately after its publication and "in autumn" 1844 he wrote to his brother: "It is a highly intelligent and ingenious work and has something to say about the truth of egoism—but eccentric, one-sided, falsely defined. His polemic against anthropology, namely against me, rests on pure lack of judgment or thoughtlessness. I agree with him up to one thing; in essence he does not touch me. He is nevertheless the most ingenious and freest writer that I know." If there already comes from these few lines the whole inner insecurity of Feuerbach regarding his opponent—his honesty lies in constant battle

with his wounded pride—then this insecurity shows thoroughly the way in which he believes he can finish with "the most ingenious and freest writer that he knows." He first thought, as his latest biographer, Wilhelm Bolin, reports, of an "open letter," for which he also drafted the beginning. It is still extant and reads: "Dear 'ineffable' and 'incomparable' egoist! Like your writing altogether, so too especially is your judgment of me truly 'incomparable' and 'unique'. I have also long anticipated this judgment, even though it is so original, and said to friends: I will be so unrecognized that I, who am now the 'fanatic, passionate' enemy of Christianity, will be counted even among the apologists of it. But that this would happen so soon, would happen already, that—I admit—has surprised me. That is 'unique' and 'incomparable' like yourself. As little as I now have time and desire to refute judgments that do not touch me but only my shadow, I'm still making an exception in the case of the 'Unique One', the 'Incomparable One'."

Happily Feuerbach gave up continuing to refer to Stirner in this style, but he unfortunately remained with his short "explanations," instead of taking courage and time for a thorough answer. In a further letter to his brother of 13 December 1844 he once again seeks to excuse himself and comforts himself with the silly, but for his ethical arrogance very telling assumption that "Stirner's attacks betray a certain vanity, as if he wished to make a name for himself at my expense." Thus he magnanimously leaves to the poor nameless one the "childish joy of a momentary triumph." In truth the clever man appears to have suspected that in Stirner a formidable opponent had arisen, whose victory over him meant nothing else than his own complete destruction, and he preferred therefore to avoid further battles so as not to betray the fame of the victor through new defeats. Probably from similar reasons he omitted signing his name to his remarks in *Wigand's Vierteljahrsschrift*, which had drawn universal interest to the controversy that was expected from all sides. Incidentally, it may also be said here that Feuerbach and Stirner never personally met;

Feuerbach never came to Berlin, and Stirner never left there from the time a meeting would have been of interest for both.

As was said, Feuerbach, Hess, and Szeliga answered Stirner jointly. He must have written his reply "Recensenten Stirners" [Reviewers of Stirner] immediately after the appearance of the critique in question and almost in haste. Like Feuerbach, he too speaks of himself in the third person.

After the brief characterization of the authors: Hess as socialist, Szeliga as critic, and the anonymous as—Feuerbach—he first goes into the point on which all three agree, into the "Unique One" and the "Egoist."

According to them, the "Unique One" appears as "the spook of spooks," as the "holy individual that one must beat out of one's head," and as a sheer "braggart."

Granted, the "Unique One" is a hollow phrase, an expression that expresses nothing. With regard to the holy and lofty phrases such as man, spirit, the true individual, etc., it is still only the "empty, low-brow, and common phrase." He, the unique one, whose content is not thought-content, is therefore also ineffable and "because ineffable, the most complete, and at the same time—no phrase." But that Szeliga himself is the phrase-content, Feuerbach with his imagined Unique One in Heaven (God) is the phrase without phrase-owner, and Hess, this unique Hess, is himself only a bragging—that the three have not grasped.

Their characterizations of the egoist are highly popular and all too simple. The examples chosen by them are stripped of their holiness: the touching example of Feuerbach, who opposes the courtesan to the beloved; that of Szeliga of the rich girl and the bickering woman; and that which Stirner used for Hess of the European and the crocodile—they all give occasion once again to view from all sides

the nature of one's own interest when compared to the holy interest. The holiness of the connection of the sexes, pride of service, work and the human law of love provide an insight into discoveries that are just as deep as they are striking; they show anew how nonsensical it is to bring holiness into simple intercourse relations, which they allow to exist longer than interest demands ("the interest of persons in one another ceases, but the uninteresting bond continues to exist; how foolish it is to place what is absolutely, generally interesting over one's own personal interest") and how fruitless following "higher" laws is, instead of leaving it to the individual to do what appears to him to be the most useful.

Stirner closes his general answer by noting that none of the three "made allowance" for the longest section of his work, that in which he treats so extensively the intercourse of the egoist with the world and his unions, i.e., each ignored this section. He concludes by dedicating a few words yet to each individual. In them he disregards the crude and crass attacks of indignation against egoism.

It is clear that it did not even occur to Szeliga to use "pure" criticism: what he carried out is not the "pure," but rather a thoroughly self-involved criticism.

Feuerbach did not at all go into the point that mattered, namely "that the essence of man is not Feuerbach's, or Stirner's, or anyone else's essence." He has no hint of it. "He remains stuck in complete unconcern with his categories of genus and individual, I and you, man and human nature," says Stirner. The other replies to Feuerbach defy a repetition in the brevity required here as much as Feuerbach's "explanations" themselves; to be understood at all both must be read and examined in their entirety. Therefore only this much—that Feuerbach's objections must retreat step by step before the relentless logic with which Stirner refutes every single one of them.

Stirner concludes by proving to Hess that he as man cannot be any more complete than he is: the whole genus man is contained in him, in Hess, and there is nothing lacking of what makes a man a man. He further shows him how little he has understood egoists uniting among themselves, how absurd it is to assume that bourgeois society could matter to him in any way. He then seeks to counter a series of objections, having passed over others with justified scorn, such as over the remark that calls Stirner's opposition against the State the "quite ordinary opposition of the liberal bourgeois"; "anyone who has not read Stirner's book indisputably sees that immediately." Finally Stirner explains to Hess with a few simple, obvious examples his "union of egoists." (Hess called it—very inexactly—"egoistic union.") For Stirner this is not a union of egoists in which some allow cheating at the cost of the others, but rather in which the interest of the one, even if only fleetingly, in passing, touches the interest of the others and therefore is the motive for coming together.

Finally Stirner reminds his three critics of a passage from Feuerbach's little article "Kritik des Anti-Hegels." Since the forgotten treatise may be found in only a very few hands, let it be quoted here. Feuerbach speaks in it of the double kind of criticism that has always befallen philosophical systems: the criticism of recognition and the criticism of misunderstanding. About the latter he says in the passage mentioned above: "The critic does not separate here philosophy from the philosopher; he does not identify himself with his being, does not turn himself into his other I . . . He always has other things in his head than his opponent has; he cannot assimilate his ideas and consequently cannot make sense of them with his understanding; they move around in the empty space of his own self like Epicurean atoms, and his understanding is the chance bringing together of an apparent whole through appropriate special exterior hooks. The unique, valid, objective measurement, the idea of the system, of which the omnipresent soul, itself in the greatest contradictions, is still the present

unity, is an object for him either not at all or only in a self-made, bad copy. He therefore finds himself transferred onto the field of his opponent in an unworldly land, where everything necessarily comes to him so wonderfully 'New Holland' [the earlier name of Australia], that 'sight and hearing fail him', that he himself no longer knows whether he is awake or dreaming and perhaps at times, though certainly only in the fleeting moments of his *intervalla lucida* [lucid intervals], even has doubts about the identity of his person and the correctness of his understanding. The most noble harmonically linked forms dance past in the most adventurous tangles as inconsistent, grotesque figures before his perplexed eyes, the most elevated expressions of reason sound like meaningless fairy tales to his ears. In his head he probably also finds ideas or concepts analogous to philosophical ideas, and possesses in them a few meager clues, but only for the goal of nailing the philosopher on the cross with them as a criminal to common sense. For he knows these concepts only in a quite limited extent and holds this extent to be the law of their validity. Were they to extend beyond this narrow boundary, he loses them from sight. They become lost for him in the blue haze of the unreachable as phantasms, which the philosopher, by means of an until now still unexplained secret trick, hypostatizes at the same time as the *second sight* [in English in original] of his reason."

These words of Feuerbach very much suit most, even the great majority of critics of Stirner, who was to get to know only this, the criticism of misunderstanding.

Feuerbach, however, probably never thought when he wrote them that he himself would be reminded by another of his own words.

The hopes to which Stirner gives expression—at a later occasion to talk more extensively about some of the questions treated, such as the bourgeois society, the holiness of labor, etc.—show how seriously he thought of applying his further interest to the social question. They remained unfulfilled however.

Only once more, for the second and last time, did Stirner answer criticism of his work. It happened almost two years later. Wigand had followed his *Vierteljahrsschrift*, which had been suppressed after a short existence, with *Die Epigonen*. Here, in the fourth volume, of 1847, after his book had been spoken of several times in the preceding volumes, Stirner published under the pseudonym G. Edward a reply to Kuno Fischer.

The latter, at that time a young twenty-year-old student in Halle, had shortly before published in the *Leipziger Revue* a long article, "Moderne Sophisten" [Modern sophists], in which he subjected the whole modern school of philosophy to a criticism that was as insolent as it was superficial, but was not unimaginative. Since that journal immediately folded, he let his article be reprinted in the fifth volume of the *Die Epigonen*, at Wigand's wish, and out of respect for his opponent who, as he said, would have made him into a *corpus delicti*.

In the meantime Stirner answered him. His manuscript must have been available to Fischer, for along with his reply appeared an answer by Fischer. Both carried the common title, "Die philosophischen Reactionäre" [The philosophical reactionaries]; the remarks of Stirner had the subtitle; "Die modernen Sophisten. Von Kuno Fischer" [The modern sophists, by Kuno Fischer]; Fischer's answer was "Ein Apologet der Sophistik und ein 'philsophischer Reactionär'" [An apologist of sophistry and a 'philosophical reactionary'].

On a close examination of G. Edward's answer it might have the appearance as if it did not come from Stirner's pen. Not that the author spoke of Stirner in the third person, which was only natural, but because the style of the short work does not always show the otherwise unmistakable characteristics of Stirner's style. But Fischer assumes with such certainty that Stirner is the author and the latter himself made so little an attempt to contradict this assumption that with all prudence we are probably justified in viewing the essay, which is extraordinarily important in so many particulars, as a work of Stirner.

"Die modernen Sophisten" of Kuno Fischer begins with a consideration of "the principle of sophistry," then from it to go on to "the philosophical prerequisites of modern sophistry," as they appear to him in Hegel ("the manifestation of the absolute spirit in the theoretical and practical energy of man"), Strauss (the pantheistic recognition of the absolute spirit), Bauer (the disappearance of every object in pure arbitrariness), and Feuerbach (the standpoint of real humanism). He first sees "modern sophistry" in Stirner: "the absolute egoism or the spiritual animal kingdom." The greatest part of the treatise is devoted to him. Stirner is the Pietist and dogmatist of egoism, who sees spooks everywhere; the unique one "the dogmatic arbitrariness—which has become a principle—a monomania founded on belief in ghosts." We shall soon see how Stirner answers this. The last part of the essay is occupied with two books, of which Fisher asserts that the sophistry in them goes even beyond Stirner, from egoism to the individual and from the latter to irony. These too will soon be spoken of. At the end the antithesis to the modern sophistry is designated—humanism, "free mankind."

In his reply Stirner mocks the astonishing nimbleness with which Fischer finishes with "the tiring Titan-work of modern criticism." Just as it is altogether kept much more personal than the earlier reply, so too it is at the same time rich in witty and telling ideas. According to Fischer's pattern every thinker can be called a sophist: viewed this way or that he is either a "philosopher" or a "sophist." The next remarks can again only be understood if repeated in their unabridged form and cannot be reproduced at all in a few words. The concepts given by Fischer as established in usage, e.g., that of the "objective powers of the world," of "thinking," of the "moral world," are examined from new sides. His description of sophistry in history is investigated: the Jesuits, the Romantics ("particular" subjects), "pure criticism." The contradiction between interest and principle is touched on. The assumption that Stirner's egoism had developed as a consequence

of the Bauerite self-consciousness is confronted with the fact that Stirner had already finished his work while Bauer was still stuck in the work of his Bible criticism, and that Stirner therefore could only have recalled the proclamation of "absolute criticism" in an appendix. Fischer appears not to know of Stirner's polemic with Feuerbach. If he had known of it, he could not have seen in Stirner's "egoism" the "should" of a "categorical imperative," a dogma. For Stirner sets the egoist contrary to the "should" of "being-man," humanism, the unhuman—sets his "Ataraxie" [calmness], his intransigence, his terrorism against everything human. How crass is the misunderstanding that Stirner therefore wished to give up all community with men, to withdraw himself from all characteristics of their organizations by merely denying them!

This reply closes with an indication of the powerful consequence of Stirner's work and a witty comparison. Even if it were not written by Stirner, it came from a man who may boast of having already grasped at that time the essence of his teaching deeper than most. When at the end he compares Kuno Fischer with a man whose treatise amounts to becoming famous *à tout prix* [at any price], then he is also right in that.

The contemporaneous answer of Fischer to him was alone a new proof for the correctness of his assumption.

A year after the publication of *Der Einzige*, also in Wigand's publishing house, an anonymous work *Das Verstandesthum und das Individuum* [Rationality and the individual] appeared, which was soon after followed by a second, less extensive work with the title *Liebesbriefe ohne Liebe* [Love letters without love]. Their author called himself Karl Bürger. In reality the author of both was a young philosopher, who had been a member of the Hippel circle for a while and later also of the Köthener Kellergesellschaft [(wine) cellar society of Köthen], whose real name was Dr. Karl Schmidt from Dessau. He later returned to his theology, wrote numerous pedagogical works, and made himself known especially through his multi-volume *Geschichte der Pädagogik* [History of pedagogy].

It was in the two just named writings that Kuno Fischer so astutely perceived the transition from the "spiritual" to the "natural animal world" and to "irony." They may here be passed over, not so much for this reason, as rather because in fact people often believed they saw in these abstruse productions, scribbled down in great haste, a last continuation of Stirner, and that they might make him ridiculous with them. But since Stirner himself hoped that his opponent "will be so honest as not to expect him" to read more than a page in the *Verstandesthum*, then we will also content ourselves with this one page.

Summarized in it may be the effort of the author to show what "the only truth would be, if one were once mere reason." Outwardly drawn up in dependence on *Der Einzige*, *Das Verstandesthum und das Individuum* appears to culminate in the assertion: "The individual does not think atomistic, single things, but rather stares, looks at, and grasps them." The *Liebesbriefe ohne Liebe* is a rather witless parody of Schlegel's *Lucinde*; with it we may do without even the one page.

It was in the year 1846 that Stirner was visited by a young poet filled with great excitement by his work—"though in the opposite, inimical sense." He came to present to him first a poem he had just finished. The young poet was named Alfred Meissner and his work was titled *Ziska*. Stirner's answer, which Meissner himself related, is one of the very few personal expressions from his mouth that have remained to us. But there is another reason to repeat it here.

Stirner returned the manuscript with the words: "You should have fashioned *Ziska* into a comic heroic poem. To a kind of *Batrachomyomachia*! [A storm in a puddle; much ado about nothing. The word is the name of a mock heroic poem in Greek, supposed to be by Pigres of Caria, and means *The Battle of the Frogs and Mice.*] The myths of the Christian church have become a slave to fate, as the heathen ones have. The contrasts of the Papacy and Protestantism have become so completely a thing of the past that a poem with this content could only interest, say, theologians. There should be no more opposition to the Church. It has become completely indifferent to us:

one no longer battles against positions that have been overcome. Yes, I feel it clearly: it should have been a comic heroic poem."

This answer is so characteristic for him that it may be taken here as a starting point for a last view of the influence and the consequences of *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* in the future. For, as minor as it is in and of itself, it does indicate the position that Stirner assumed in his struggle. This struggle was not against the outward forms of the Christian world view, the moldy and decayed church of the present, rather this struggle was against that spirit, which builds in ever new forms ever new strongholds of power, the spirit of Christianity, which like a gloomy haze lies over the past.

To have stripped this spirit of its holiness and exposed it as the insubstantial ghost of our imagination is Stirner's achievement. While the most radical minds of his time—Strauss, Feuerbach, Bauer—still feel their way critically, but fearfully, on the concepts of holiness, he dissolves them and lets them disintegrate.

He overcomes Christianity in its last consequences. It is destroyed. It lies behind us with its thousand-year-long humiliation, its filth of brotherhood, its countless horrors, with which it sullies history, its lies, its self-divestment of every pride, every ownness, every genuine joy and beauty; and even if it still prevails today in its final effects, Stirner has nevertheless taken it from us—like a curse!

Thus he stands on the borderline between two worlds, and a new epoch in the life of mankind begins with him: the epoch of freedom!

We have still found for it no better name than that of anarchy: the order determined by mutual interest instead of the previous orderlessness of power; the exclusive sovereignty of the individual over his personality, instead of his subjugation; the self-responsibility of his actions instead of his dependence—his uniqueness!

For, on the basis of the Christian worldview rest the pillars of all those concepts that hold up power; as Stirner withdrew the ground from them, they had to fall, and with them falls what they supported.

So powerful will this bloodless reversal of all life relations be—and comparatively as quick as it is sure—that his immortal book in its consequences will one day be compared with the Bible.

Just as this "holy" book stands at the beginning of the Christian calendar, to carry for two thousand years its disastrous effect almost to the furthest corner of the inhabited world, so stands the unholy book of the first, self-conscious egoist at the beginning of this new time, in whose first signs we are living, to exercise an influence just as beneficial as that of the "Book of Books" was pernicious.

If we wish to say once more what it is, how could we do it better than with its creator's own words? They are: **"A mighty, reckless, shameless, conscienceless, proud—crime"**—committed on the holiness of every authority! And with Max Stirner we ask, exulting in the outbreak of the cleansing and liberating storm caused by him: **"Does it not rumble in distant thunders, and do you not see how the sky grows presciently silent and gloomy?"**

Note to page 153:

Stirner's quotation from Schiller, *Wallenstein's Tod*, Act 1, Scene 4, as given by Steven T. Byington in *The Ego and His Own*, is:

> I dare meet every foeman
> Whom I can see and measure with my eye,
> mettle fires my mettle for the fight.

Or, in the classic translation of Samuel Taylor Coleridge:

> I brave each combatant,
> Whom I can look on, fixing eye to eye,
> Who, full himself of courage, kindles courage
> In me too.

Chapter Six

The Final Decade

The Final Decade

1845-1856

Slow decline – The economists of the French and the English – Final attempts – Marie Dähnhardt's divorce – Her later life and death – Back to Stirner – Application for a loan – Last journalistic works – At Hippel's in Dorotheenstrasse – *Die Geschichte der Reaction* – Highpoint of need – Way out – Last intercourse – Sickness – Death and burial – Descendants – The survivors and their destiny – Final consideration – Farewell – Prospect

We left the man Johann Caspar Schmidt at the height of his life, at the moment when, as the thinker Max Stirner with his unique work, he saw the eyes of people directed on him with such various expressions—admiring, indignant, doubting. We now return to him to descend slowly with him from the peak into ten years of solitude and—it is painful to say—also need.

Stirner's marriage to Marie Dähnhardt appeared outwardly more firm than it was inwardly. Begun without passion, it was nourished by no renewing love and was, in the wife's own words, "more a living together in the same house than a marriage."

The husband sat during the day in quiet work in his room, the wife was occupied by herself, and only in the evenings were they together in the company at Hippel's and elsewhere.

They did not move in bourgeois circles; theatre and concerts were almost never visited. They led the simplest life imaginable in their dwelling in Neu Kölln, Am Wasser.

The marriage remained childless. It was at any rate also in this connection a great disappointment for the young wife, who did not find the hoped for satisfaction in the curious reserve—manifoldly misinterpreted also in this point—that characterized Stirner's whole being.

In addition there also came another, serious, and finally decisive circumstance: the fortune that the wife brought to the marriage quickly melted away—all too quickly.

The wife later put the blame for this exclusively on her former husband. In plain words she accused him of having downright "verspielt und verschwimelt" her fortune (a specifically North-German expression, for which in other regions of Germany the word "verjuckt" [squandered] is probably the most suitable synonym). Even

after many years it put her in a "very sad" mood and made her blood boil to think "that a man of education and rearing could take advantage of the situation of a weak woman by betraying the trust with which she had entrusted all her means to him."

Thus, she said, she cooled off and lost her respect for him.

Bitter and unreconciled as they sound, these words are reported here and no attempt is to be made to gloss over then in any way.

All the same, however the simplest justice should be satisfied by pointing out:

(1) These words came from the mouth of an old woman who had completely discarded the views of her youth and whom no outward or inward bond tied any longer to the days which she did not wish to remember.

(2) She was asked: How was Stirner able, with their simple married life, to go through a relatively large sum in so short a time? An answer—apart from the expression given above—failed her.

(3) She herself, doubtless of her own free will, in the year 1844 already lent to Bruno Bauer for the bookshop of his brother Egbert in Charlottenburg the not inconsiderable sum of 2000 talers, which, incidentally, the latter, strict character that he was, paid back with meticulous conscientiousness over many years—it was said to have lasted five years—in monthly installments, first of 3 to 5, then up to 50 talers: a proof that she too had charge of her fortune as she thought best.

Also, since no explanation was given, this may probably be believed: that both of them lived day by day, without care or concern. It is well known that a sum of money melts away fastest in the hands of those who never had "money in their fingers" and who mostly find themselves in regrettable error as to the inexhaustibility of such a sum.

Stirner was by no means careless and lazy.

He kept his position at the girls' school of Mme. Gropius a whole year after his marriage with Marie Dähnhardt; besides he must still

have been completely occupied in that year with the final completion of his work.

When it was about to be published, he decided to give up his position and announced his resignation to Fräulein Zepp, who was in charge of the school at that time, for 1 October 1844. Since they had no idea of the reason, they were very surprised; they reluctantly lost a competent and popular teacher.

Marie Dähnhardt had begged her husband to stay, since it really would mean a "small help" in their income. "He was too proud and lazy to work for me," she said.

But Stirner stuck to his decision. The publication of his work would, as he knew, have brought him into inextricable conflict with his position, and besides he probably did not want to expose himself to misinterpretation.

It is one of the most widespread and ridiculous errors that have been spread about Stirner's life that he "was removed from his position as a gymnasium teacher because of his book, since the authorities no longer wanted to entrust to 'such a man' the education of youth."

All that of course is sheer nonsense. First, Stirner was never a gymnasium teacher and therefore could not be "disciplined," rather Fräulein Zepp could at most have terminated him. And second, as we have seen, Stirner anticipated this by doing it himself, and indeed already before the publication of his book. When it appeared publicly four weeks later, he was a completely independent man.

But to return to Marie Dähnhardt's accusation: carelessness, thoughtlessness, ignorance, and foolishness—granted all that, no one ever believed that Stirner had married the "young and rich Mecklenburger" just to gain possession of her fortune and then to waste it. She at least also did not believe this. But that this accusation, in case there were even the least foundation for it, would be greedily taken up and spread further is shown by the assumption invented and spun out by some dim head, that it had been a diabolical joy for the "discoverer of the only true egoism," to lead his young wife into the dastardly circle

of "The Free," to let her be infected there—in body and soul—and ruined. Even if this slander could fortunately be shown in another place to be, in its entire stupid absurdity, the invention of a monstrous lack of understanding, there is still lacking the decisive proof that his wife's fortune was lost only, or at least mainly, through Stirner's fault, and not through her carelessness.

Stirner was not indolent and lazy at that time.

Immediately after giving up his position and completing his book, he looked around for new income. He went into a new venture that must have kept him very much tied to his study for a long while. An acquaintance from this time speaks of his "astonishing industry."

It is *Die Nationalökonomen der Franzosen und Engländer* [The Economists of the French and the English], with which we next see Stirner occupied.

Probably in 1844 during the printing of *Der Einzige*, he had discussed with his publisher Otto Wigand the publication of this large-scale collection and had got Wigand's consent to his plan. It was a question of translating the principal works; Stirner wanted to do this himself and furnish notes to them.

He had shown in his *Der Einzige* that he had looked as deeply into the living conditions of society as hardly any other before him. He must have been convinced of the importance of the aspiring, newest of all sciences, economics, and it must have stimulated him to bring out its basic works anew and give to his nation an understanding of them.

Thus, before 1845, he had begun with the translation of the famous textbook of Jean Baptiste Say, *Le Traité d'économie politique* [Treatise on political economy, 1803], whose four volumes were printed and published in installments in rapid succession in this and the following year. But the planned annotations were omitted. Stirner explained this at the conclusion of the work itself thus: "When the translation of Say was begun, it was my intention to supply it with

notes at the end. In the meantime it more and more emerged that Say and Smith are too inseparable for the former to receive a special accompaniment of notes before the reader was given the opportunity to get to know the latter as well. I will admit that this view came to me at the right time, since it would have been disagreeable to me if I already had to publish the annotations written up to then in their form at that time. Therefore, the translation of Adam Smith will occur first." The translation of *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* [1776], likewise in four volumes and published in installments, also appeared so quickly that it was available already in April 1847. But in it too are found only the notes that [John R.] McCulloch, [Jérôme-Adolphe] Blanqui, and others had added to Smith's presentation. Those of the translator are lacking this time too, without his thinking it necessary now to excuse himself. Their lack is in any case an irreplaceable loss and greatly to be regretted, even if only the smallest part of them had materialized.

Stirner's editing of his collection ceased with the work of Smith; there did still appear Wilhelm Jordan's translation of P.-J. Proudhon's *Système des contradictions économiques ou Philosophie de la misère* [System of economical contradictions or the philosophy of misery, 1846], but Stirner was no longer involved in the enterprise.

The translations of Say and Smith were and are considered the best in existence.

The success of this very large and tiring work must have been small from the beginning, or at least corresponded little to the hopes cherished in the beginning; for already in the year 1845 we see Stirner—although in this and the following year the publication of the principal works of Say and Smith was completed—turn from his literary activity, as he had once turned to it when he renounced any State teaching activity. He must have quickly recognized that he could not live on the income from his pen and that the most advisable thing was

to set foot in another field through a bold attempt, which, if it succeeded, would have forever banished the threatening specter of the future.

Stirner's new project was a dairy business, and it was to take the remainder of his wife's fortune. Whether this was his own idea or his wife's is debatable, as is also the point in time in which it was put into practice.

In all probability it was considered already in the spring of 1845 and came into being in the summer of the same year.

What the few, inexact, and very contradictory reports relate about this curious enterprise, which to many appeared as a joke and yet was intended so desperately seriously, is to be described here.

At that time the milk supply of Berlin came every morning from the surrounding villages on small dog carts. Stirner's basically correct view was that if the supply was built up on a larger and more concentrated basis, this would open up a not insignificant prospect of profit. He had as partner in the enterprise a Charlottenburg school teacher named Rohlfs, a friend or relative of the Bauer family—an honest man, but one likewise inexperienced in business. They established a milk warehouse in the city itself, from which it was planned first to supply the needs of a small, then ever wider and wider circle. They roamed the surrounding villages, made connections with the farmers and tenant farmers, concluded contracts about the delivery, and rented rooms for an office and a spacious cellar in Köthenerstrasse (or Bernburgerstrasse?). According to another version, they also bought their own goats and cows and rented stalls in the Oranienburger Chaussee.

Then on a certain day the delivery came on specially fitted out wagons, but not the expected customers. The project, which was without sufficient advertising and not carefully enough thought out in detail, broke up. It is said that the supply, having become sour, was poured into the gutter and the rented rooms were already closed after a short time.

How sound the idea of the enterprise was, in spite of the unsuccessful attempt, was later shown by Klingel-Bolle, which is well known today by every Berlin child. It mixed its milk, if not with water, then with a big portion of Christianity and thus contributed not inconsiderably to the success of its business.

Thus this enterprise of Stirner also failed, after it had offered inexhaustible material for mockery to the Hippel crowd, whose wounded guild-consciousness again showed itself on this occasion despite their otherwise extensive freedom from prejudice—and it ate up the fortune of his young wife.

The very last desperate attempt of Stirner appears to have been aimed at seeking his luck in the stock market. He at least questioned an acquaintance in great detail about the kind of transactions there, and was strongly advised against any attempt.

The poverty that up to then had only knocked, now threateningly stood in its whole distressing form in the door of the house.

The relationship of the married couple had become intolerable, inwardly and outwardly. What would have drawn other, simply formed natures closer to one another, must have inexorably driven these two, so inwardly different persons to the step of separation. Each for himself and on his own feet—in the end they saw their deliverance in this. They did not believe in ruin and did not want to believe in it.

The first thought of separation came from Marie Dähnhardt, and it was she too, who took the decisive step.

It sounds very beautiful, but unfortunately does not at all correspond to the sad reality, when it is related that "the courageous wife approached her husband" with a decision "so difficult and so ideally pure," as was once expressed by Charlotte Stieglitz, and said to him:

"My presence causes you worry and cripples your working strength, the earnings are not sufficient for both of us. I find here no suitable occupation, I have found it in England, I am called there as teacher in a reformatory. That changes nothing in our love, I am and remain your wife, and the longing for me will steel your working strength. Your concern for earning a living will be lighter, and if you succeed in gaining a permanent position, then call me and I will return."

On the contrary, the separation must have taken place in a very abrupt way, and he would have viewed it not as "sad," but rather with his usual calmness, when she announced her decision, probably in no less than touching and loving words.

But also it came to a "scene" at that time as little as ever between the two.

Whether they thought of a reunion is more than questionable; by no means did she have any intention to do so.

"She even took her rings from his fingers," a few days before her departure, she says. What she means with these words will probably remain an eternal puzzle. Were they rings that she had given him and which she now demanded back? Was it the marriage ring, which had probably replaced in the meantime the brass ring from Bruno Bauer's wallet, and did she wish to show him thus that everything between them was at an end?

They probably corresponded further with one another, but principally only to bring about the divorce that took place a few years later.

At the beginning of April 1846 the separation took place after a two-and-a-half-year marriage. On 16 April Marie Dähnhardt went to London; Stirner remained in Berlin.

Let us first follow the destiny of the wife—to see how sad and curious it was yet to turn out.

Marie Dähnhardt went to London with good references, above all with such to the wife of the Prussian ambassador, Lady Bunsen.

Through the mediation of this influence she soon received the possibility of giving private lessons in the German language; and even if these were not splendidly paid, probably seldom more than two shillings an hour, they did suffice to eke out a living. The young, fresh-looking woman was soon a beloved member of the German refugee colony; through her energy, her confidence, and the openness of her character she gained a circle of friends that was not second to that in Berlin in its combination of interesting and intellectual people: Louis Blanc, [Ferdinand] Freiligrath, [Alexander] Herzen and others sat often and gladly at her little hearth. With them she also continued without concern the life she led in Berlin—the best proof that it was not Stirner's influence alone that had kept her among the Berlin radicals. Her independence remained the same. Accompanied by a large dog she found her way home alone in the evenings and did not tolerate gentlemen making detours for her sake, which in London were so very time consuming.

In London she also tried her hand at writing, probably for the first and last time in her life, by writing for the *Berliner Zeitungshalle* of Julius a series of "Vertrauliche Briefe aus England" [Private Letters from England], which, however, did not bear her name. There are seven in all, and they appeared from March until November 1847. Without any special literary significance, they do disclose the sharp gift of observation of a clever woman. For us they are above all of interest because they give us in an unequivocal way the authentic picture of Marie Dähnhardt's views at that time. She castigates the prudish morality of the Englanders, she mocks their ridiculous "keeping Sunday holy" and their running to church, and she relates with winning openness how she sees a young man in a bus "so handsome, that she just could not get enough of looking at him." "She would soon have told him. He also noticed it."

Thus she still appears entirely the same as she was in Berlin.

When Lieutenant Techow, well known from the storming of the Zeughaus [Berlin arsenal involved in the insurrection of 1848—Techow sacrificed a brilliant career to take the part of the people], came to London in 1850, she established a generally well known relationship with him, which however did not lead to marriage.

In this period her divorce from Stirner took effect. The plan of a reunion was probably still kept up outwardly until then from personal considerations. Now the final, purely external bond between the married couple was severed.

Frau Schmidt, as she still called herself, spoke of her stay in Berlin seldom and reluctantly, and almost never of Stirner; but also, and this deserves to be emphasized, never with bitterness, not to say contempt.

About the year 1852 or 1853 she joined a small group of emigrants, with whom she went to Australia. Some of her closer London acquaintances were among them: a journalist Max Cohnheim, a certain Rosenblum, a Baron Hoch, and two Russians.

Techow too was on the ship. But the relationship with him had already been completely dissolved when she boarded the ship in Gravesend, where her one unmarried sister had come to see her off. The ship was to take her to long years of discouragement and poverty.

For in Melbourne she tasted misery down to the last drop. She struggled with it, but lost again and again—she became a washerwoman, and was said to have married a second time to an "ordinary worker." The years that she spend in Australia are enveloped in an impenetrable darkness.

Then when she gained an inheritance from her sister—about 1870 or 1871—she returned to London. Already in Australia she had completely fled to the arms of the Catholic Church. She had gone over to religion and already at that time had converted to such piety that she fervently begged one of her London acquaintances to at least save his children and raise them with the Bible and only with the Bible—and again with the Bible.

Having returned to London she fell completely into the hands and under the power of her new co-religionists.

There, in the vicinity of the immense city, she, who was once the darling of the "unique one," lived for many long decades—an old, bigoted woman. She sought to save souls with little tracts and repented her sins, sins that lived only in the imagination of her fanaticism, sins she never committed. Otherwise she was still intellectually

fresh and clear, and still capable by herself of taking care of her few transactions in the city from time to time. She was the touching example of a strength broken by need and misery, that once sought and found the joy of life, and yet she was at the same time the proof of how little the love of freedom means, which generates only the intoxication of fleeting hours, which does not daily nourish anew the inner necessity of one's own life.

The world was already long dead for her, who was once called Marie Dähnhardt, and no sound of the noisy world reached her any longer. Mary Smith was "prepared for death" [in English in original].

On 30 December 1902, shortly before three o'clock in the afternoon, Mary Wilhelmina Smith, then in Plaistow, a suburb of London, died at the old age of 84. She was buried on 3 January 1903 in the Catholic cemetery of Leytonstone.

She died "in God." The death that she awaited will have come all the more longed-for, since she suffered much physically in her last years.

Her Nachlass and a small amount of money were left by her in favor of Catholic charities, local welfare institutions. No papers or records of any kind were found that would have been able to give any information about her earlier life.

Marie Dähnhardt outlived her sisters and was survived only by their children, her nieces, of whom the one who had been closest to her had likewise passed away.

We now return to Stirner. He remained in Berlin. Where else was he to go? His wife had left him, the attempts he had made to earn money had fallen through, and he was certainly just as convinced of the difficulty now, with his name, of obtaining a teaching position, as he was of the impossibility of earning a sufficient living through large-scale literary works.

But what he did is surrounded by an almost mysterious darkness, which is illuminated only at times under the flashes of isolated facts.

He seldom goes out any more; his friends still see him only now and then. No one knows what he actually lives on. He disappears more and more for us, along with those who surround him. The last decade of his life is for us almost like the first ones: we still see his form stride though life, but we hear his voice only unclearly as if from a far distance.

He is as inconspicuous in his dying as he was in his whole life. He stepped onto the public stage without any din, and he left it again without a stir.

And yet Stirner is only in his early forties. What a long life still lies before him! What does he still hope from it? How does he believe he can lead it to its end?

We no longer see into his thoughts.

Already in the summer of 1846 it had come so far that Stirner had to insert in the advertisement section of the *Vossische Zeitung* an appeal for a loan, trusting that his name would perhaps obtain such.

The advertisement read, in Stirner's own wording:

> I see myself under the necessity of having to take a loan of 600 talers, and therefore ask one person—or more, if they want to combine their contributions—to grant it to me for a term of five years in case they are inclined to give me personal credit. Address responses to the Advertisement Section under A 38.
>
> M. Stirner

It is not known if the attempt was successful or not. It is not likely that it was. But even if it were, it would only serve to delay, not hinder, what was inevitable under the circumstances.

At any rate—arbitrarily expanding the simple and worthy form—many spoke scornfully and mockingly of the egoist, who had denied right and duty, and now expected and promised them. These clever people forgot only that Stirner did not think of awakening the trust of

such altruists as they were, but rather simply that of an egoist like himself: to believe him—on his word. That he, who is without moral clichés, will most probably keep his word much more conscientiously than he, who so often later hides behind the same clichés, when it is necessary to keep it—to understand that, these same people were naturally completely incapable.

We know little more of him.

We only know that, after he and Marie Dähnhardt separated, he gave up the dwelling at Neu Kölln, Am Wasser, which was held in common with her, and on 4 April 1846 moved to Hirschelstrasse 14, now Königgrätzerstrasse. And from there, year by year, restlessly farther: at the beginning of April of the next year to Dessauerstrasse 15, thus quite in the vicinity; again a year later, at the beginning of April 1848, to Dresdenerstrasse 96; and in the autumn of this same year to Köthenerstrasse 27 (at the painter Otto's), where he lived for three years. He always had his own apartment.

It may probably be assumed that Stirner tried to increase his meager income in these years of need through journalistic articles, which, however, he no longer signed. Thus in the summer of the revolution year 1848 he became a collaborator of the *Journal des österreichischen Lloyd*, which was in its thirteenth year. This was the principal organ for trade, industry, shipping, and political economy in Trieste; directed by Friedrich von Bodenstedt, it continued through this summer, then transferred in autumn to Vienna. Stirner's activity ceased with this move.

Among the "valuable contributions from Germany," which Bodenstedt received, are found eight articles by Stirner, which appeared in the numbers 143, 167, 177, 187, 211, 219, 220, and 222, of 24 June, 22 July, 3 and 5 August, 12, 21, 22, and 24 September, without his name and preceded by a sign △ obviously set there by the editor.

The first article, "Die Deutschen im Osten Deutschlands" [The Germans in East Germany], was at the same time the most extensive.

Proceeding from the thought, what great migration the map of Europe "in the near future" must doubtless be exposed to, Stirner connects it to a small, anonymous article, "Polen, Preussen und Deutschland" [Poland, Prussia, and Germany], and shows how "federalism is a higher form of the life of peoples than centralism." He explains how Germany, which "lies in the middle of the real Europe," receives a mediatory position—"and indeed expressly not a ruling role, but only a mediator role"—and how—since "it is not a nation-state and can never become one"—it must be essential for it to join itself in its eastern part with the eastern peoples, while Austria stands at the head of a large federal state of Danube peoples, which corresponds to a Baltic federal state toward the northeast, whereas Russia, divested of its harmful influence on the affairs of the European peoples, must remain closed off from an international role. For it is a question of whether "Asia should become European, or Europe Asian." Austria and Italy need Germany. Like the Austrian, a Baltic federal state must be built with Poland as the kernel, which "as a completely dead state, remains a member in the large organism of peoples" and is compelled to join Prussia so as to protect itself from a civil war.

Germany, which in its essence is not a pure nation-state, must simply join itself with foreign elements to the east and, having established again the trade route from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea, build such again from mouth to mouth of the Rhine and Danube: "We must again have a natural field of commerce—a great field of federated countries from the far side of the Schelde River to the far side of the Dvina River, and from the Swiss mountains to the Pontus."

The second article, entitled "Kindersegen" [Blessed with children], is a clever and crushing mockery of the absurd suggestions that years earlier a certain C. W. Weinhold had made against the "Übervölkerung in Mitteleuropa" [Overpopulation in Central Europe], suggestions that culminated in all earnest in a kind of infibulation of all male individuals until they entered into marriage, and thus probably presented about the farthest that the "moral tyranny" of the State-idea ever dared offer to the individual. Stirner designated these suggestions, "which were not at all foreign to the spirit of that time," as the

correct consequence of the police state, "which for the greater good of humanity infibulates living human beings in all kinds of ways," and then goes without further ado from the fanatical fool himself to an inquiry into the overpopulation question.

He shows how here only good sense in marriage can obtain what police force never brings about, and that the whole question must be merely a question of private economy in the married household and not one of society, although "society on the other hand at all times prevents any matter into which it interferes from sinking to a purely private matter." Finally, by touching on the standpoint of some of his contemporaries, he shows convincingly that "if we grasp the concept of morality from the intellectual side," the truth comes out that "the highest morality lies in the correct exercise of the highest freedom." The "procreation question," after it has been treated from the standpoint of mankind as an "overpopulation question," has now become, from the standpoint of the individual, a "conception question," a question of personal interest. "Whether it has won or lost thereby is, after a *fait accompli*, a superfluous investigation, as indeed all moralizing proves to be unfruitful in matters of world history."

As Stirner in the first of these articles from the year 1848 will admit the state in general only as a nation, and ascribes to it only a mediating, not a ruling role, so here too he wrests the private person from the clutches of society, sets the interest of the private person against society, and places the interest of the private person above it. It is thoroughly the "Unique One," who here unmistakably speaks, and for this reason the value of these works, which arose in the stress of the problems of living and in the daily struggle, is not to be underestimated.

He appears as such in the other six articles, entitled "Die Marine" [The navy], "Das widerrufliche Mandat" [The revocable mandate], "Reich und Staat" [Empire and State] (against which the editor objected that he was "not in agreement with it in all parts," yet he recognized its "intellectual grasp"), "Mangelhaftigkeit des Industriesystems" [Inadequacy of the industrial system], "Deutsche Kriegs-

flotte" [German naval force] and "Bazar" [Bazaar], although they are only connected with questions of the day and all are of short content.

The most important among them, "Reich und Staat" [Empire and State], points out how diverse the two are in their whole essence, since "the one presumes a common way of thinking for its stability, the other nothing more than a sociability of fellow countrymen and peacefulness of communication," and its author is of the opinion that the longing for a merging of the individual states into the empire is only the struggle for freedom, "to be able to withdraw unpunished from State-federation and State-citizenship," although he does not believe that this urge will also find its complete satisfaction in the empire, and that those, who are demanding this merger in addresses and petitions, are not clear that it is less the "whole freedom," than the freedom from forced belief that brings them to declare themselves for the downfall of the dynasty (i.e., the State) and their sympathy for the empire.

It is the only time that we know of a collaboration of Stirner on a journal. If he did more, then it certainly no longer happened, as before, under his name.

Meanwhile the storms of revolution had broken out over Berlin.

"The Free" still always met at Hippel's. He had moved in autumn 1847 or spring 1848 from Friedrichstrasse to Dorotheenstrasse 8, to new and more spacious rooms. That had also become necessary, for "The Free" were no longer the only society that had Hippel's as their favorite café, but rather before and after the days of the revolution it served as a kind of headquarters for the most various radical currents. Often the worthy Hippel was barely able to keep the various camps apart and distribute them appropriately at the tables and in the back room, so that they would not go at one another—something that did happen often enough.

In the days of the revolution itself, they went in and out at Hippel's like bees in a hive. Everyone brought some kind of new report. Some told of what they had seen and heard, others of their own heroic deeds. Shouting, noise, and jubilation were all colorfully mixed together. The most exaggerated hopes were expressed, to be answered with the sharpest ridicule, and the exciting hours ran their course in passionate debates.

Even the coolest heads of "The Free"—with the exception probably of only Stirner and Bruno Bauer—became heated and only after days—when the members of the political, the democratic, and other clubs, and finally the members of the famous National Assembly appeared in ever larger numbers at Hippel's—did they find their earlier criticism again, which now, though, fell devastatingly on the unfortunate movement.

There were still the old ones: Buhl; Edgar Bauer, who had returned from his prison sentence; Faucher, who had taken part in the fight of 18–19 March and talked a lot about his deeds; Dr. Wiss and his wife; Meyen; Maron, "who was already believed to be dead"; Löwenstein, wounded; Ottensosser, who had been captured; and many others.

Then, as more and ever more new people appeared on the scene and assembled at Hippel's, some of the old, faithful, regular guests began to feel uncomfortable, and stayed away or at least came less often. It was the beginning of the end. "The Free" began to scatter and wither away.

Their time had passed. A new one broke out and they knew it: the time of a hopeless reaction, in which everything was destroyed that they had strived for, or better said: in which all the fortresses against the intellect had been again built up in medieval form, which they believed they had destroyed with the sharpness of their intellect, the battering ram of criticism.

How they came to terms with this new time will be spoken of later.

It hardly needs to be expressly mentioned that Stirner had taken not the slightest outward part in the March days of 1848 or in the whole movement. Thus they may also be only fleetingly touched on here.

He will have watched the outbreak with the liveliest interest, which he had certainly seen long beforehand. But it was not his battle, that was fought out there. He, who had so deeply grasped the nature of force and so well knew its power, could not have been in doubt about its victory. Did he also foresee to what degree of humiliation it was to lead?

He too was often seen at Hippel's in that time. But in the quiet life that, after years, he led for himself alone, the year 1848 meant no event that could have given his days any kind of other form.

He continued to live, as someone said, "genuinely Berlinerish, cheerfully content" and unnoticed as much as possible; another said, "one still found him only at times in out-of-the-way pubs, where he desperately sought to detach himself from his thoughts in the newspapers." We know no more of him. The only luxury that he allowed himself was his cigars. For a good cigar had always been almost the only enjoyment of this man who was so modest in his needs. It also remained his last and most loyal friend.

At the beginning of the year 1852, Stirner went public for the last time with a work that carried his name, the second and last. It is *Die Geschichte der Reaction* [The history of the reaction]. Nowhere in the meantime is his name to be found among the collaborators on any paper; he had probably given up seeking help in daily literary work.

Die Geschichte der Reaction was published in two volumes in Berlin at the end of 1851 by the publishing house Allgemeine Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, whose owner—Sigismund Wolff—very much appreciated Stirner. Incidentally it was immediately banned in Austria. It was incomplete in form and was originally planned to be essentially different from its final appearance. The title was supposed to be *Reactions-Bibliothek* [Library of the reaction], and the whole was to encompass two sections; the first was to treat "Die Vorläufer der Reaction" [The forerunners of the reaction], the second, "Die moderne Reaction" [The modern reaction].

The first volume of each of the two sections was published.

The first encompassed the constitutional assembly and the reaction. But instead of immediately adding "the representation of the reaction in the legislative, in the convention, and the following representative bodies up to the completion of the Napoleonic reaction," Stirner leaps from the description of the inner reaction immediately to the outward. Thereby, as he said, "he follows the law of similarity and, by preceding it with the historical description of the inner, gives to the outward reaction its proper introduction," and at the same time he sees, "in the outer the natural heightening of the inner reaction."

Then he begins right off with the second section and gives us in its first volume the presentation of the first year of the reaction in Prussia, "the true center of the reaction, as the future will teach." The first year is for him 1848: "the year of chaos or the first chaotic uprising against the inimical world, the year of the reactionary instinct," since in it "the reaction develops into a power."

He still continues to think of continuing the enterprise: he states that the first section must have more the character of a collection so as to avoid repetitions in the second. But it never came to a continuation in the presentation, neither of the inner nor the outer reaction.

In the foreword to the first volume of the second section, the second and last of those that were published, Stirner gives an extremely interesting presentation of what is reactionary and what it is not. "Whether the reaction can justify itself," is what he would have shown if he had been allowed to bring his enterprise to a conclusion. The presentation culminates in the sentence: "The reaction came into life in the same moment that the revolution came into the world: both were born in the same moment"—from totally different parents, as he adds. And in the sentence that gives to the reaction "its historical place": "The reaction is the opposite of the revolution."

The content of the two published volumes is only in a very small part Stirner's own. Not only the first, but also the second is a collection of the work of others, and only the introductions, the connecting passages, and the selection are Stirner's work.

If the first volume testifies to his thorough knowledge of the history writers of the age of the revolution, the second shows with what attention Stirner has followed the year of the outbreak of revolution in his own land in all its manifestations.

Stirner introduces his presentation of the constitutional assembly and the reaction with a historical consideration of the ministerial and representative revolution and then views the representative reaction against the people's assembly. Thus he follows his plan, to set opposite one another "in this volume the basic revolutionary and reactionary ideas of a constitution," and the two authors that he plays against one another in this way are Edmund Burke and Auguste Comte. Almost the entire volume is filled with passages from the former's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (in the translation of [Friedrich] Gentz) and the latter's *Système de philosophie positive ou traité de sociologie instituant la religion de l'humanité* [translated as: *The System of Positive Polity*]. On which side Stirner stands is not in doubt, despite the very brief connecting passages—his remarks on the "Declaration of the Rights of Man" and a remark on the "rhetoric" of Burke show it sufficiently. Since he goes from the latter directly to the modern reaction, the notorious reactionaries of the middle period, [Pierre Victor] Malouet, [Jean Joseph] Mounier, etc., further [Joseph] de Maistre, [Carl Ludwig von] Haller, and the Germans [Friedrich] Gentz, Adam Müller, and others of sad memory, are passed over.

If in the body of the first section Stirner is more occupied with explaining how the reaction arose from out of the revolution, then in the presentation of the modern reaction he still cannot begin by presenting the reaction before its own tribunal, but must in its first volume seek to penetrate the chaos of the first revolt, and he rightly fears that "a great monotony" is not to be avoided. And so it is. It is above all the reactionary authors of the day, Hengstenberg, Florencourt, and others, often not named, who Stirner lets speak here, and their views, given in their full extent, are tiring in the long run.

It is mostly complaints and accusations that sound from the reactionary side in this year, which was then "the whole year a year of complaints."

After a consideration of "the revolution" and "the reaction," and of a "look back at the earlier time," taken from the Pietist [Heinrich] Leo, Stirner again gives the "achievements and prospects" of the reaction and leads us into the battle of the "Christocracy." He shows us its battle from all directions: there are "reactions" from all sides. The crown, its servants, subordinates, the State—all react.

A chronological survey of this year shows the growth of the reaction from month to month, from February, "the growing recognition of the enemy and the gradual discovery of one's own strength," on to December, when it has already conquered the revolution.

In this volume too the whole work of Stirner consists in ordering and loosely binding together what is translated. Even the latter is often not even given in his own words. He refrains from placing the reaction before the court and becoming its accuser; let it place itself before its own tribunal, he says.

He breaks off with the first year of the reaction, in which "the questions just begin to pose themselves"; the questions themselves and the system of reactionary theories he leaves to be treated in further volumes.

Die Geschichte der Reaction was Stirner's last public declaration. To be sure, he did make a large-scale plan, a kind of universal scholarly dictionary, but he had to give it up, since he found no publisher who would dare to undertake it with him.

His name was to be found no more. After 1848 he was forgotten along with many others.

He was also a dead man from a literary viewpoint, dead, although he was still alive.

How completely forgotten he was, is shown by one telling example: the *Brockhaus Konversations-Lexikon* of 1854 no longer had the least thing to say about his life and declared that the author of *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* was "allegedly" named Max Schmidt!

Stirner now became more and more isolated. He was almost never seen anymore even at Hippel's, who moved his wine tavern in 1853 from Dorotheenstrasse to Rosenstrasse 3 in Werder, in the corner behind the Werder Church.

At the beginning of October 1851 he moved from Köthenerstrasse, where he had stayed three years, to Dessauerstrasse 2 (c/o Ilse), to remain there a year and a half. From now on he no longer lived in his own apartment, but rather as a roomer, and so probably had to sell his furniture.

His old friends knew nothing more of him. Thus the last tie that bound him even loosely to an intellectual outside world was broken.

The year 1853 appears to have been the highpoint of his misery: pressed by his creditors and without any means of living he moved restlessly from one place to another and twice during this year he found himself in debtor's prison!

The first time was for 21 days—from 5 to 26 March. Shortly after he was released from there he moved on 1 April to a room on Jaegerstrasse 72 (c/o the teacher Schulze). He announced his departure on 1 July for Nauen, then, apparently still pressured and pursued by his creditors, he fled to Moabit, where he was living on 3 July, c/o Rinow, Stromstrasse 8. But he found no rest there either, and in the end he found quarters on 7 September, in the same year 1853, c/o Madame Weiss, Philippstrasse 19.

Yet here too the creditors found him and he was not to end the year quietly. [The word for "creditors" here is "Manichäer," literally Manichaeans, but the German is a word-play on the sound, similar to "mahnen" (= to dun), hence "creditors."] Precisely on New Year's Eve he found himself once again in prison for debt, where he remained for 36 days—until 4 February of the next year. Even if debtor's prison in those days—today no longer a known institution—was nothing else but a prison where the debtor had to be kept at the cost of the creditor and therefore seldom lasted long—what a sad light this fact alone sheds on the circumstances of the man, who was once marveled at by many as the most brilliant thinker of his time. And

these simple, sober details—do they not speak more movingly of his poverty than words would be able to do?

Stirner did still call himself gymnasium teacher, writer, Dr. phil., and—pensioner. In reality he was now a commission agent, who lived from hand to mouth, as the commissions for a go-between offered themselves.

At least he found quiet in Philippstrasse, where he lived at the home of the widow Weiss from 1853 on. Along a hallway on the first floor up, he had one or two rooms, whose windows at that time still looked out on the open Platz der Anatomie, which was covered with trees. The larger room had the second and third windows, as seen from the street; the window of the smaller room was over the archway.

Mme. Weiss is said to have always cared for her renter like a mother.

It was Stirner's last home. He was to change his quarters only one more time!

The year 1853 was the highpoint of Stirner's misery.

In the next year he found a way out, which was both to rescue him from his hardships and to preserve him from any worse to follow for the rest of his life, which he surely believed would be long.

The way out consisted in selling off the inheritance of his aged mother, the house that belonged to her in Kulm—even before it legally became his possession.

On 12 September 1854, before the notary Lipke in Schwetz, a small village on the Weichsel River opposite Kulm, he closed a contract in "a strange matter" with the merchant Abraham Mairsohn from Kulm to the effect that immediately after the death of his mother "the two-story house No. 9, along with a separate parcel of 40 acres and a garden" was to go into the possession of Mairsohn. The buyer had to make payments to Stirner on the sale price of 5000 talers.

To insure that the buyer would not be harmed in the case that Stirner died before his mother, Stirner had to take out a life insurance policy, so that in this case Mairsohn would receive 1000 talers, which was raised in a second policy to 1500 talers, while a third was rejected.

Immediately after concluding the contract, Mairsohn paid Stirner 300 talers. After the insurance policy was completed he paid another 300, and finally, after the heightened policy, another 400 talers—all together therefore 1000 talers, with 5% interest. He also obligated himself, until the death of Stirner's mother, to pay the yearly insurance premiums for his contracting party.

There was still a 1000 taler mortgage on the house, which had been granted to the guardian of the widow Ballerstedt for the purpose of repairs. Thus after concluding the sale Stirner still had a claim to 3000 talers.

Since he died so unexpectedly before his mother, this part of the contract was never completed.

In the meantime, the 1000 talers he received was sufficient to free him from his creditors and protect him from further pressing worries for the short time of the two years that were left to him, given the abstemious way he was then living and his very modest lifestyle.

From 28 August until 21 September of that year he was absent from Berlin to conclude this contract.

Even though Stirner lived a very withdrawn life in his final years, he still had contacts.

He was welcome in the house of Freifrau von der Goltz, whose acquaintance he had probably made at the end of the 1840s, when he lived in the same house with her on Köthenerstrasse. He was introduced to her by the family's tutor, a Herr Förster, while he in turn introduced the Bauer brothers to the baroness. [Freifrau = baroness. This is the mother of the Baroness von der Goltz mentioned on pages vii and xiii.] He visited the hospitable house often and also became

acquainted there with a music director Hering among others. Until her departure from Berlin in 1854 he appears to have possessed a helpful friend in the lady, who was interested in all intellectual endeavors.

He expressed his philosophical views gladly and often, and surprised people here with his radicalism and outward calmness. He also spoke occasionally of his unfortunate milk business, but never of his writings or his marriage.

Although the nameplate on the door of his dwelling had the name "Schmidt," he still called himself nothing but Stirner and was only known as such by his acquaintances.

His death came unexpectedly. Stirner, whose firmly and often expressed confidence had been, that he would become "ancient"—a proof of how healthy he felt—suddenly became sick in May 1856 with a carbuncle on his neck.

It is not certain if this fatal sickness, which was the only serious one of his life, was brought on by the sting of a poisonous fly, as has been asserted. It is certain, on the other hand, that on 23 May 1856, when the carbuncle had already attained the size of a hand, he went to a doctor to be treated. The doctor immediately ascertained a high fever—in the form of a nervous fever—yet under his instructions the sickness took a favorable course, so that a clear pustular surface formed, the fever disappeared, and his appetite returned. The sick man could even make a successful attempt to leave his bed.

Unfortunately the doctor treating him went away and his care had to be placed in other hands. Probably as a consequence of a fault in his diet, perhaps also through the new and incorrect treatment, the fever came back and quickly rose high, so that fourteen days later death occurred.

The original tumor had spread to other parts of his body, the pus was filled with blood, and death followed on 25 June as a consequence of the "nervous fever" caused by the discharge of pus.

Max Stirner died of a "common tumor" on 25 June 1856 (not on the 26th, as was earlier generally assumed), in his dwelling, toward evening, about six o'clock, aged 49 years and 8 months.

Three days later, on 28 June, in the evening about the same hour, he was buried in the churchyard of the Sophien parish on Bergstrasse. He received a grave of 2nd class, which cost one taler and 10 silver groschen. It lies in the 11th section of the churchyard, in the ninth row, and received the number 53.

Only a few of his old friends accompanied him "on his last journey." Among them were Bruno Bauer and Ludwig Buhl, and surely also that Mme. Weiss, at whose house he died and who had identified the corpse.

For Bauer's sake, he was sketched by an acquaintance while still on his death bed, and Bauer's joy was great to see recorded, as least in death, the head of his friend, in whose "formation full of character, the intellectual significance of the deceased shows itself with complete decisiveness."

According to another, but less likely report, "the portrait of Stirner's head made immediately after his death" came into the hands of the literary figure Dr. [Adolf] Wolff of Mauerstrasse 83 (at any rate, this is the long since dead "black Wolff," the author of *Berliner Revolutionschronik. Darstellung der Berliner Bewegung im Jahre 1848 in politischer, sozialer und litterarischer Beziehung* [Chronicle of the Berlin revolution. Exposition of the Berlin movement in the year 1848 in its political, social, and literary relation]). Was it the same drawing? Was it another? At any rate both are irretrievably lost.

The papers in Stirner's Nachlass came into the possession of Ludwig Buhl, who lived at that time in Schützenstrasse 12. We shall see how he later ended up. It is useless to hope to follow up weak traces of Stirner's life, which time has completely erased.

What other goods were left were certainly without any special material value and were probably auctioned off to satisfy his debts.

Only after days did a very few newspapers take notice of Max Stirner's death. Most had not even a last word for the forgotten man.

But what was said, even in those few, was without exception limited to a vague and dim remembrance of his work and the sensation that it once temporarily aroused, or consisted in superficial and anecdotal warmed-over stories of his wedding, which in one case, probably on the instigation of Bruno Bauer, received a firm denial that was highly typical in its certainty regarding the undeniable facts.

Johann Caspar Schmidt was dead, as Max Stirner had already been before him.

Stirner himself left no direct descendents, and the whole, wide circle of his original relatives has likewise been dissolved. Nowhere at all are traces of them to be found today: the family of his father in Ansbach has died out; on his mother's side the Reinleins in Erlangen died out; of the Stichts, the family of his godfather, none is living any longer in Bayreuth, and only in workers that can show no connection does this name still continue there. Missing too are the members of the family of his stepfather, the Ballerstedts; in Helmstedt and in Kulm there are no traces at all—what would they be? In Berlin, no one bears the family name of the first Frau Stirner, Burtz; and in Gadebusch the name Dähnhardt is today almost unknown.

Stirner was survived only by his mother. She died only three years after him on 17 March 1859, in the private insane asylum in Schönhauser Allee, which she entered in 1837, and thus had been in it for more than twenty years.

She attained the age of 81 and until her death, certainly until 1854, was completely active physically.

She died of "infirmities of old age" and was buried in the Georgenkirchhof at Königsthor

Her illness was by no means an organic disease of the brain. She suffered rather, according to her son's own statement, from a "fixed idea" brought about by great misfortunes in the family; we do not know, however, what kind of "fixed idea" this was.

Her heirs were the children of her brother Johann Gottlieb Reinlein, who had died somewhat earlier—the citizen, gold-worker, and appraiser Johann Theodor Reinlein; Sophia Rosine, who was married to the Royal Bavarian Tax Commissioner Friedrich Stillkrauth; and the unmarried Anna Maria Reinlein—all living in Bayreuth. Between these heirs, on the one side, and the merchant Mairsohn, on the other side, there naturally arose a disagreement and legal action regarding the contract between the latter and Stirner concerning the house in Kulm. Of the outcome only this much is certain: the house was sold by the heirs at the end of 1859 to the Prussian Regional Director Arndt in Kulm for the sum of 4700 talers. Mairsohn was probably compensated for the 1000 talers that he had already paid Stirner and withdrew, or he collected from the life insurance, which made up for it.

As the last distant relative of Stirner, there still lives today in Bayreuth only Babette Stillkrauth, a daughter of the Stillkrauth mentioned above, but she knows nothing more about him.

We do not wish to take leave of Stirner without considering for a moment the later fate of the survivors from that company at Hippel's that, after him, are of most interest to us.

How sadly they all, with few exceptions, ended!

The storm winds of the year 1848 drove them apart and they lost forever every connection with one another. Many immigrated to America, to seek their fortune, and some also found it there. But most remained behind and sought to come to terms with the changed circumstances as well as they could—each in his own way. Their arduous attempts offered no happy spectacle: some went over completely to the enemy's camp of the reaction and sought to make their youth forgotten; others believed they could deceive themselves and those around them about the rift of their position by bitter mockery, which only too often sounded like bitter self-contempt. Only a few remained

upright, and these probably experienced the change of the times in which they had to continue to live the most painfully.

Bruno Bauer became the "recluse of Rixdorf," who eternally fought heroically for the needs of life—one moment he ordered his own burial plot, another he sought to bring back his forgotten name with new works. Untiringly active, his strength remained unbroken until his death, and what he wrote allows one unmistakably to recognize him as a brilliant stylist and sharp thinker. Bauer consumed himself for years spellbound in the service of the sadist of all parties, under the yoke of degrading work for the *Kreuzzeitung* and [Friedrich Wilhelm Hermann] Wagener's *Staats- und Gesellschafts-Lexikon.* Withdrawn from the world, he hardly sought to deceive himself anymore about his retreat. But whenever he came to Berlin to sell the vegetables he had grown himself and to greet one or another of his old acquaintances—in his self-patched suit, his feet in high boots, and on his head the unavoidable peaked cap—his patriarchal figure strode through the streets as unbowed as in the days of his youth, and his calm eyes glanced clearly and piercingly as ever. Bruno Bauer died in 1882, after he had done everything humanly possible to help his brother Egbert and Egbert's numerous children.

It did not go better for Edgar Bauer. Later estranged from his brother, whom he at first worshipped, he went first in 1849 to Hannover, where he endeavored with [Hermann] Olshausen to work for the liberation of Schleswig-Holstein, then to London, from where he wrote several brochures. After 1866 he first sought to settle down in Hamburg. The *Kirchliche Blätter*, which he brought out with the rigidly Lutheran Bishop Koopmann, shows only too clearly his complete conversion to the church camp. From the former revolutionary he became a reactionary of the purest sort, who as an adherent of the Guelph party worked hard for a long time in Hannover until—in great need and long since forgotten—he likewise died there at the beginning of the 1880s.

Ludwig Buhl's fate also took a sad form. He too lived a long time, completely withdrawn and again and again "in his family, a Catholic, dirty, uneducated company, he forfeited what he had gained with difficulty for himself in intellectual distinction." He hardly worked any more. One morning, shortly after 1880, he was found dead at his desk. They say he ended with suicide, since his final attempt of an "idea commission business"—he "invented" ideas for the publishing business, which he then sold to enterprising publishers—was said to have brought him into conflict with one of his customers, who threatened him with charges of extortion. Stirner's Nachlass was lost along with his, and the paper bundles no one noticed have certainly long since been destroyed.

"Verbuhlt, verbrasst, verbauert—is the reaction now" sounded a satirical song of those days. [This is a word play on the names Buhl, Bauer—mentioned above—and August Brass, who took part in the 1848 revolution, but was a follower of Bismarck from the 1860s.]

Friedrich Sass died young; [Eduard] Meyen continued his productive journalist life for a long time, was at first expelled from Hamburg in 1851, went from there to England, but returned again to Germany, where in 1867 he founded *Die Reform* with [Arnold] Ruge; Jules Faucher likewise fought a long and honorable fight for the victory of his ideas in his fatherland, but the weapon of his *Vierteljahrsschrift für Volkswirtschaft und Kulturgeschichte* just lay too heavily in his hands to be able to attract a wider circle, while he saw the State draw its iron rings closer and closer around freedom; his attractive daughter Lucie remained the joy of his eventful life; [Carl Friedrich] Köppen worked further as a gymnasium teacher in beneficial activity and sought in profound studies, which led to his famous *Buddha*, to overlook a time that could only fill him with disgust.

We now return once more to the man who departed this life as one of the first of the whole circle.

Sad as Max Stirner's early death is, there is actually nothing shocking about it, if we imagine how this life would have been expected to pass, if he had been allowed twenty or thirty years more.

The last years of life—if no fortunate chance had altered it—would probably have shown no very great change: Stirner would have continued to live in sad, bitter need, eternally in the struggle with his poverty, and without the strength to take up the struggle once more with a complete decisiveness and to lead it to any kind of success.

What else could he have done? Would he have ended like the others? Would he have sold himself to the reaction, like the Bauers, and would he have been able to tolerate the inner conflict? Would he perhaps have also immigrated to America? He, the passive man, hardly practical in the things of life, in spite of his unheard-of intellectual energy? Or would he have survived a further series of years, finally, like [Hermann] Maron—ending his own life, overtired and worn out?

Or would he have waited for the rare chance that would have been able to give his life a decisive turn? A vain hope! For what kind of chance could that have been?

He had no relatives whose inheritance could have made him independent. He could not believe in the reawaking of his book in any foreseeable time. Another time, a time of disgrace and repression had begun, which was to last for a long time until it reached its climax, giving rise to bloody, ruthless wars, a time whose only great counter current, the social one, was to get lost in a political party and subside in it—the time of reaction, in whose sad shadow we still live today.

No, no more chance could be sweet to Stirner in the evening of his life!

In the way he lived and died, he was completely true to himself. The great work of his life was done.

Nothing could further elevate its value. For his best strength had been applied to it.

He quietly and patiently bore years of poverty, and the greatest consolation is surely that we may tell ourselves: in all probability he did not suffer too severely. His very modest lifestyle, even more his genteel self-sufficiency and the quiet cheerfulness of his disposition will not have entirely left him.

Those who believe that all happiness of life consists only in honor, wealth, and power among men will never understand his life and will continue to say in pitying mockery that the teacher of egoism followed his teaching poorly in his own life or that following it bore bad fruit.

No—*Max Stirner followed his teaching* and he harvested all its fruit, as far as it was possible for him. For he was a superior human being. He lived as he was able to live.

Not, perhaps, as he would have wished to live. If we pose the question thus, the answer will sound: Certainly he would have preferred to live in that union of egoists, or—to avoid all misunderstandings—in the time of those unions that eternally arise and pass with the needs of men, to which the individual voluntarily gives his strength, to feel it a hundred times stronger; in a word: not in a time of rulers and servants, but of unique individuals. For he was as little suited to obeying as to ordering.

There is nothing shocking in Stirner's early death. He departed while still in the strength of health and without the final and hardest drink from the cup of life: infirmity of the body in the loneliness of old age.

And yet his death is sad, because it came so early. He who neither loved life excessively nor feared it, did not fear death, but also did not long for it.

Let us linger yet another moment at his grave, before we take our leave of Max Stirner.

Already in 1856, soon after his death, Ludwig Buhl organized a collection to mark the grave with a stone. Money came from old friends and admirers of the deceased—among others a ducat was sent from an admirer in East Prussia. But the sum, which in all probability was very small, was never applied in accordance with its purpose. After 28 June 1856, when he was buried, the grave was probably never again visited by anyone.

Thirty-three years were to pass before the sunken-in grave was found again, and thirty-six until it was marked with the massive stone from which, in large, golden letters, shines the name of the man, whose simple and yet so great life these pages have sought truthfully to relate.

New graves have enclosed the old one, and whoever wants to find it today must laboriously seek it through their narrow rows.

The golden letters of the name on the slab are losing their luster. But while they fade there, this name shines its victorious gleam through the night of our time and announces the morning, the morning of the freedom of the human race.

Already the new race is stretching its hand to receive its blessing and to make use of it for itself—for its own happiness.

This grave can and should be nothing more to this new race.

For he who lies there lives again—lives in its hopes and in its wishes.

New graves have enclosed the old one.

After "another fifty years" even these new graves will have sunken and the churchyard perhaps will have become a public garden in which the children of tomorrow carelessly play around the unmovable slab. Will the passing person then, still spellbound in dull servitude, walk on by the name that silently speaks from there? Or will he know that he who was called Max Stirner first of all won the freedom for him, in whose sunny rays he wanders with head held high and happier than those who lived before him?

Appendix

Max Stirner
Stations of His Life's Journey

1806

25 October: Birth in Baireuth
6 November: Baptism

1807

19 April: Death of father

1809

13 April: Remarriage of mother with the apothecary Ballerstedt; with him to Kulm to cavalry captain Goecking
19 December: Birth of sister Johanna Friederica

1810

Fetched to Kulm

1812

21 September: Death of sister Johanna Friederica

1814

26 June: Death of cavalry captain Goecking

1818

Brought back to Baireuth

1819

Enters school

1826

Autumn: Final gymnasium examination
8 September: Leaving certificate
18 October: University enrollment in Berlin
Rosenthalerstrasse 47

1827

Dorotheenstrasse 5

1828

1 September: Name removed from university student register in Berlin
20 October: University enrollment in Erlangen

1829

Summer: "Lengthy trip throughout Germany"
2 November: University enrollment in Königsberg
Steindamm 132

1830

One year in Kulm: "Because of domestic circumstances"

1831

One year in Königsberg

1832

28 November: Second university enrollment in Berlin
Poststrasse 9
Lengthy illness

1833

Easter: Neuer Markt 2, c/o Burtz

1834

27 March: Name removed from university student register in Berlin
2 June: Applies for the examination pro facultate docendi
August: "Mentally ill" mother suddenly in Berlin
29 November: Submits written work

1835

28 January: Mother received into the Charité hospital in Berlin
24 and 25 April: Oral examination
29 April: Examination certificate (conditional facultas docendi)
Trial teaching year at the Royal Realschule of Spilleke

1836

Voluntary half-year teaching (until autumn) at the Realschule
Winter: Private studies

1837

4 March: Application for a position
16 March: Rejection notice
19 July: Death of Ballerstedt in Kulm
17 October: Mother in the private institution at Schönhauser Allee 9
12 December: Marriage with Agnes Clara Kunigunde Burtz
Married couple: Klosterstrasse 5–6

1838

6 April: Oranienburger (Communal?) Strasse 86
29 August: Death of wife in childbirth
5 October: Neue Friedrichstrasse 79 (c/o mother-in-law)

1839

1 October: Enters the girls' school of Madame Gropius

1842

January: Collaborator on Gutzkow's *Telegraph*
January: *Gegenwort*
Correspondent on the *Rheinische Zeitung* and the *Leipziger Allgemeine Zeitung*

1843

4 October: Neu Kölln, Am Wasser 23
21 October: Marriage with Marie Wilhelmine Dähnhardt

1844

Collaboration on Buhl's *Berliner Monatsschrift*
1 October: Resigns from the school of Madame Gropius
End of October: *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* published

1845

Die Nationalökonomen der Franzosen und Engländer begun
Summer: Dairy business
Reply to Feuerbach, Szeliga, and Hess

1846

Beginning of April: Separation from Marie Dähnhardt
4 April: Hirschelstrasse 14 (now Königgrätzerstrasse)
Summer: Attempt to obtain a loan

1847

3 April: Dessauerstrasse 15
Die Nationalökonomen der Franzosen und Engländer completed

1848

4 April: Dresdenerstrasse 96
Collaborator on *Journal des österreichischen Lloyd*
Reply to Kuno Fischer
5 October: Köthenerstrasse 27

1851

3 October: Dessauerstrasse 2

1852

Geschichte der Reaction

1853

5–26 March: In debtor's prison
1 April: Jaegerstrasse 72
3 July: Stromstrasse 8
7 September: Philippstrasse 19, c/o Mme. Weiss

1854

1 January – 4 February: Again in debtor's prison
28 August until 21 September: Absent from Berlin
12 September: Contract with Mairsohn in Schwetz

1856

May: Illness
25 June: Death
28 June: Burial

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Max Stirner (1806–1856) was the philosopher of conscious egoism. His book *Der Einzige und sein Eigenthum* (1844; published in English as *The Ego and His Own*, 1907) is the fundamental work of that philosophy and the philosophical basis of individualist anarchism. The German poet and anarchist writer John Henry Mackay carefully researched Stirner's life and published his biography in 1897, with a third, definitive edition in 1914. This is the first translation into English.

John Henry Mackay (1864–1933) grew up in Germany with his German mother after the early death of his Scottish father. His long literary career included writings in a variety of forms, though he was best known as a lyric poet and anarchist. His boy-love writings were published under the pseudonym Sagitta. The rediscovery of Max Stirner was due to Mackay.

Hubert Kennedy, the translator of Mackay's biography of Stirner, has also translated much of Mackay's other prose writings, including the novels *Der Schwimmer* (1901; *The Swimmer*, 2001)—one of the first literary sports novels—and *Der Puppenjunge* (1926; *The Hustler*, 1985), which describes the sexual underworld of Berlin in the 1920s. A former mathematics professor, Kennedy has also published in the history of mathematics and the early history of the gay movement in Germany and Switzerland.

ISBN 1-59457-983-0

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